Where's the Party Going? *Morris K. Udall*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts – November 24, 1973, 50 cents

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John Osborne

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Gas Rationing – *Eliot Marshall*

The Year of Europe? – *The Editors*

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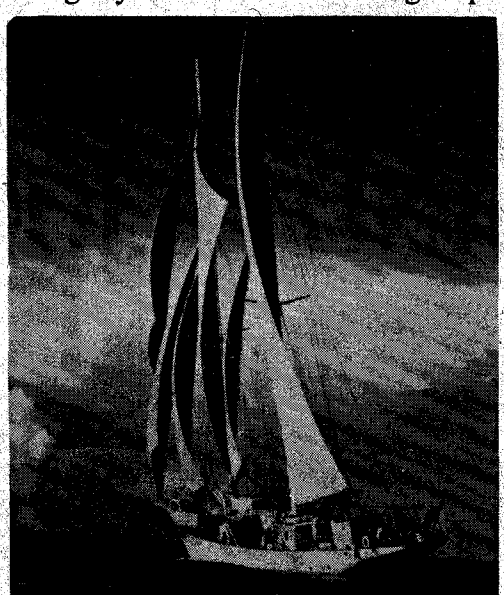

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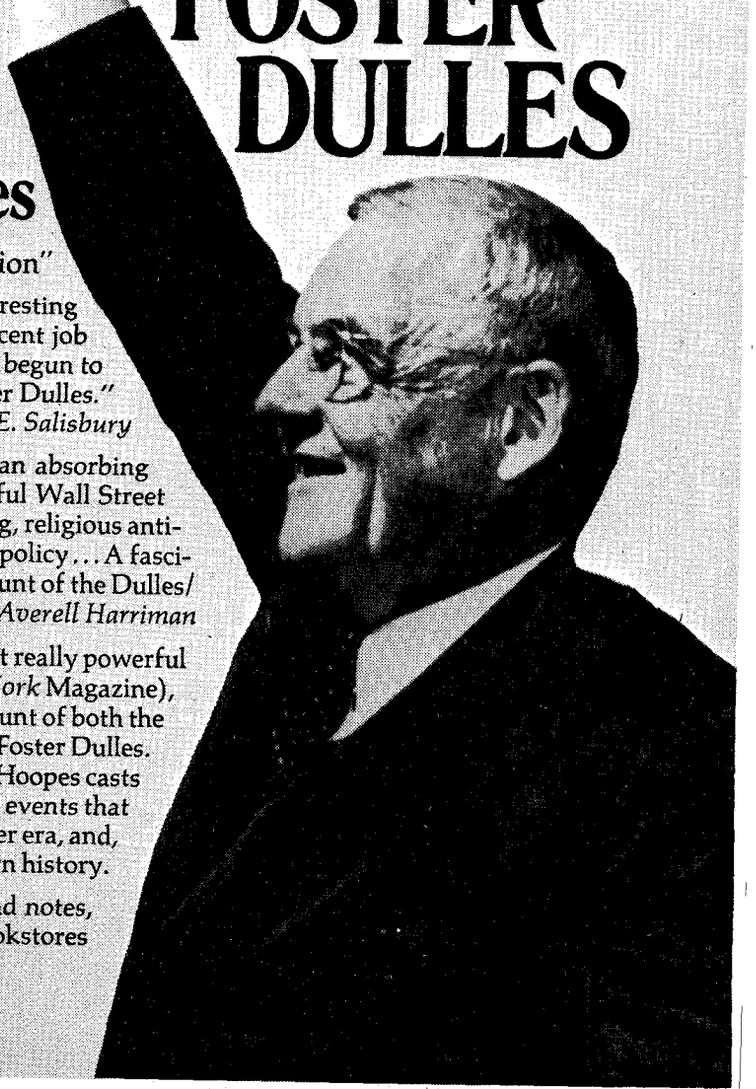

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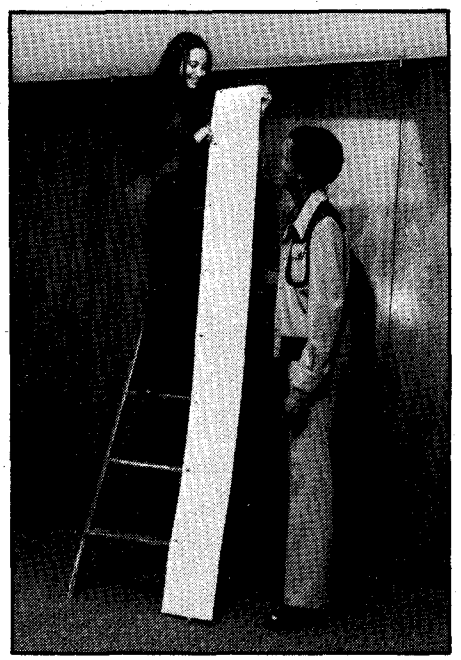

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TRB

from Washington
November 24, 1973

His Royal Majesty

They do this royalty thing very well in England and we watched the princess' fairy-tale wedding last week with double interest. There is a deep, suppressed yearning among Americans to make the President a kind of monarch, somebody you can bow down to, somebody who symbolizes all the proper and correct sentiments, somebody who sets the right shoulder style on men's suits, somebody whose role matches the awe and reverence in the eyes of eager people when they tell reporters, "You mustn't attack the PRESIDENCY."

Mr. Nixon senses that feeling. He loves big state dinners and pomp and circumstance. There are stairs to descend and uniformed trumpeters who go, Tara! Tara! He rigged up the White House guards in trappings of royalty in 1970 with white coats, black belts, gold tassels and hats with visors right out of *The Prisoner of Zenda.* Everybody laughed in embarrassment, but were they laughing at him or at the revelation of their own secret suppressed desire?

In Canada and England they separate the ceremonial and the political functions, whereas in our President we roll the two into one. There is only a single red-coated guard in front of Pierre Trudeau's modest official residence in Ottawa. So long as he is prime minister he gets the use of a summer place, too—a five-bedroom, Victorian-style cottage. That would never befit the dignity of a President, one who has Camp David, guarded by 150 sailors, and all those other places—San Clemente, Key Biscayne and so on—owned by Mr. Nixon and upon which the government has spent some $10 million.

In Canada the ceremonial side is carried on by the governor general. Mr. Trudeau is just a politician. If he wants to travel by plane he can't order Air Force One to warm up as commander-in-chief; he must put in a formal requisition for it, or else travel commercial.

We watched the royal pumpkin coach in the wedding in London last week and wondered if we couldn't manage something of that sort here. What a thrill it gives everybody. It would be a lot cheaper than our present arrangement. Prime Minister Heath has salary and allowance of about $75,000. In Canada Prime Minister Trudeau's recompense is $25,000 as prime minister, $18,000 as member of Parliament, $8000 on an expense account and $4000 incidentals (pocket money, maybe). It comes to around $55,000.

Well now, contrast our President. He gets a salary of $200,000 to begin with, and $50,000 expense allowance. He has a fund for "special projects" of $1,500,000 over which Presidents traditionally exercise great discretion. By a shrewd application of tax law Mr. Nixon gave his personal papers to the National Archives in 1969 and had them appraised at a whopping $570,000 against which he can now draw a $100,000 a year tax deduction for donations. Tax lawyers studying this and other permissible deductions figure that Mr. Nixon pays a federal income tax of around $14,500 on a quarter million dollar taxable income, all perfectly legal.

But of course, like every President, Mr. Nixon has a dual capacity; he's not merely paid as a politician but as ceremonial head of government, too. It's hard to make an estimate of what this all costs because it isn't isolated in the budget. Writing the other day in *Fortune,* Dan Cordtz decided that the actual expense of running the presidency is around $100 million a year. If correct, this rather puts in the shade the cost of the royal family over in England estimated at about $2,500,000.

It would be unfair to single out Mr. Nixon alone. We want our Presidents to be well fed and housed, and the custom goes back to Washington. On the other hand Mr. Nixon has carried it further, perhaps, than anybody else. It is an outward expression of his masterful attitude in governmental matters: he claims the right to impound funds, for example, whether Congress wants them spent or not, and his interpretation of executive privilege has about it a regal flavor. Columnist Jack Anderson quotes from secret receipts and memos of the General Services Administration's costs at San Clemente billed to the taxpayers. The only item we remember is an ice machine that makes square ice because, according to the account, the President "does not like ice cubes with holes in them." We think he may have something there; it's little things like that that upset a man.

The article in *Fortune* is entitled "The Imperial Life Style of the US President" and by coincidence Arthur Schlesinger's new important book is called *The Imperial Presidency.* "What the country needs today," he observes at one point, "is a little serious disrespect for the office of the Presidency." He quotes Montaigne with approval, "Sit he on never so high a throne, a man still sits on his own bottom." Have we carried the royalty thing too far? Schlesinger is thinking primarily of political aggrandizement; we are concerned here more with the ceremonial, the monarchical side. One is largely the expression of the other. This shows up nowhere better than in transportation: Mr. Nixon has five Boeing jetliners, 16 helicopters, 11 Lockheed jetstars, a fleet of limousines and a yacht. Just the other day, it seems, Bess Truman and her daughter were traveling to Independence, Missouri by first class compartment, paid for by Harry. Lady Bird Johnson flew to New York to shop on the regular shuttle. Times have changed and the Nixon family and staff are taxied about in government planes and copters. There is good reason for it, perhaps, in this more dangerous day.

The question arises, though, about all those gasoline guzzling presidential vehicles as Mr. Nixon asks us to practice austerity, lower the thermostat, and drive 50 miles an hour. No doubt about it, the nation is in a sour mood. Air Force One takes 20,000 gallons of gas on a round trip to San Clemente, and frequently a couple of planes make the trip. We have an energy crisis and this is the first time since Watergate that the President has been called upon to exert personal leadership by appeal and example. When he told Americans to cut back temperatures he correctly observed, "and that means in this room, too." We don't begrudge the President relaxation. Just as a hint though, in the present angry mood of the multitude, we think he ought to rein in those jetliners and helicopters, and go just a little mite easy on those quick trips to his tropical retreats.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC *A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 169, No. 21, Issue 3072, November 24, 1973. Published weekly (except the issues of July 14, August 4 and August 25) and distributed by* The New Republic, *1244 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036. Phone 331-7494. Single copy 50¢; Yearly subscription, $15; Foreign $18; Armed Forces personnel or students, $10. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Subscription Department,* The New Republic, *381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302. Copyright 1973 by Harrison-Blaine of New Jersey, Inc. Item g. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide.*

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The Year Of Europe?

"No aspect of US foreign policy commands greater attention and care than our relations with Western Europe," the President said last spring. Henry Kissinger matched that statement with an appeal for a new Atlantic Charter that, his publicists contended, would equal and perhaps surpass the Marshall Plan as a testament to partnership. As Kissinger outlined the new relationship in a speech in New York, the Americans and the West Europeans in 1973 would redefine, reorganize and revitalize their alliance through negotiations, climaxed by a summit meeting of the President and the leaders of Europe. That grand design has since been marred by misperceptions, caustic talk, and above all conflicting interests. As a consequence the much-vaunted "Year of Europe" as it was labeled is rapidly running out with little prospect that the problems it was supposed to resolve will be settled within the foreseeable future. US ties with Western Europe are more tenuous than at any time since World War II, and nothing has served to dramatize this more starkly than the Middle East war.

That war revealed, in the first place, that the West Europeans—despite their allegiance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or their reliance on the US for other forms of defense—are not about to underwrite the whole of US foreign policy. Most of them not only refused to cooperate with the administration's determination to supply Israel with weapons but, in some instances, actively thwarted US diplomatic maneuvers. Shortly after the Arabs attacked, British Prime Minister Heath declined to support a US proposal for a United Nations cease-fire resolution, and neither he nor French President Pompidou went along with Washington's desire to block a Soviet move to include both American and Russian troops in an international emergency force created to supervise a cease-fire. The West Germans, though they at first tolerated shipment of US equipment to Israel through their country, later rejected American requests to continue using the port of Bremerhaven; they were determined "not to be drawn into the Middle East conflict" and would stick by their "neutrality." The Greeks and Turks, both NATO members, denied US transport aircraft the right to fly over their territory en route to Israel. They did not, however, protest against Soviet planes loaded with weapons for Egypt violating their air space. The Portuguese permitted the refueling of US aircraft at Lajes Field in the Azores, but afterward

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they put a price tag on their generosity by asking Washington to provide them with sophisticated arms to combat guerrillas in their African colonies.

Kissinger had pointed out in his Atlantic Charter speech that the US has "global responsibilities," while its European allies have "regional interests." The two, he said, are not "automatically identical." During the Middle East crisis his position in that respect appeared confused, even contradictory. On the one hand he implied that the Europeans had only "regional interests," by failing to inform them in advance of the administration's decision to place US armed forces on alert. Yet he complained that the Europeans were not sharing America's "global" responsibilities by lining up behind American policy. The Europeans showed themselves to be similarly inconsistent. They resented not being consulted on tactics to meet a world crisis, but when asked to contribute to the US effort to counter the Soviet build-up, they backed away on the grounds that the Middle East war was a local conflict that did not fall under the terms of the NATO contract.

Nobody was fooling anybody. Oil in this instance was not a lubricant but an abrasive. In contrast to the US, which relies on the Arab producers for about 10 percent of its petroleum, Western Europe imports more than a third of its oil from the Middle East. The Europeans not only put self-interest first, but they carried that interest further by refusing to pool oil with their Common Market compatriots. French Premier Messmer took the lead when he said early this month that oil-sharing could not begin until Western Europe had shaped a common energy policy. The British said amen. Yet there is in fact an oil-sharing program within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose 24 members include the Common Market countries. The French and British have resisted implementation of that program for the simple reason that they do not want to antagonize the Arabs. The chief victim of the Arab boycott is the Netherlands, which is being deprived of two-thirds of its oil imports as a penalty for having been pro-Israel.

Although the Middle East crisis brought to the surface Western Europe's differences with the US as well as its own internal strains, these have existed for some time. The nine members of the European community have been slow to surrender sovereignty to a supranational unity. Germany has gone its own way in pursuit of reconciliation with the Kremlin. France has developed its own nuclear arsenal—both meanwhile counting on US patronage for protection. The Europeans worry that Congress may vote for unilateral troop withdrawals, and they are concerned that the Watergate scandals may bring into the White House an occupant whose attitude toward Europe may differ from that of Mr. Nixon, the devil they know. At the same time they grumble, as French Foreign Minister Jobert did last week, that the "condominium" erected by Washington and Moscow has rendered Western Europe helpless.

Kissinger's Atlantic oration ran into trouble almost immediately. It was sprung on the Europeans without prior consultation, leaving many of them with the impression that it represented an ultimatum rather than an appeal for cooperation. The Kissinger statement that "political, military and economic issues . . . are linked by reality" seemed to say that the US was seeking to make its defense contribution contingent on the settlement of trade and monetary questions. The Europeans were likewise piqued by the suggestion that once negotiations were concluded, they would be summoned to the summit like tributaries paying homage. Their response to the US bid was neither quick nor friendly, and Kissinger was annoyed.

By the middle of September the West Europeans had finished a draft of a Common Market proposal for relations with the US. It was to be separate from a NATO document dealing with defense matters, and it emphasized that the European community would function "in world affairs as a distinct entity" and would cooperate with the US on "an equal basis." This autonomous tone apparently rubbed Kissinger the wrong way. The Europeans believed that their declaration marked the start of a dialogue. Kissinger wanted something more definite. The Europeans began to suspect that Mr. Nixon was less interested in a renovated alliance than in having a dazzling international event to distract attention from his domestic troubles. These suspicions were strengthened when Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., assistant secretary of State for European affairs, called in the ambassadors of the Common Market countries and excoriated them for leaking their draft proposal to *The New York Times*. Later the Europeans resisted American pressure to tighten the links between the US and Western Europe. The administration again hit the ceiling when the text of that proposal, including the US modifications, again appeared in *The New York Times*.

The Atlantic partnership that began to be built after World War II was not held together only by the cement of a common heritage; it was held together by the dependence of Western Europe on the United States for its economic rehabilitation and thus its political and military security; and on the ominous and unmistakable threat of Stalinist power. Both dangers have receded, giving the Europeans a new sense of freedom and self-reliance. Lyndon Johnson discovered that our European friends would not march to the American drumbeat when he tried unsuccessfully to rally them round our flag in Vietnam. Mr. Nixon is learning that an Atlantic alliance for the '70s cannot be structured on the foundation of the '40s and '50s. The Europeans will have to remember throughout these negotiations that they cannot have the influence they want until they find unity among themselves. But Kissinger will have to bear in mind that the US cannot treat old allies with less consideration than it shows old adversaries.

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Gas Rationing

Like European corn shortages centuries ago, the energy shortage this winter will be bad news for the government that presides over it. Because of the Arab embargo Americans will soon experience a gasoline famine. There may be no gasoline riots, but unless the restrictions on fuel use are applied fairly, beating the system will become a sport and the poor, especially, will have little use for the "conservation ethic." Support from Mr. Nixon's "hardhats" and other blue-collar workers will be stretched thin if they are asked to make sacrifices that aren't matched at the top.

No one can be sure how hard the Arab embargo will hit, because pre-embargo shipments are still moving through the pipes. But the American Petroleum Institute calculates that US refiners have in reserve roughly the same amounts of gasoline and distillate oil they did last year—31 days' worth of gas and 58 days' worth of oil. Last year there were shortages without an embargo. Estimates of the petroleum shortfall this winter range from the low of 10 percent cited by the President to a high of 30 percent estimated by a scientist who is also a state legislator in California.

The director of the White House Energy Policy Office, John Love, and Secretary of Interior Morton have said that gasoline rationing now appears inevitable. Love ventured that January 1, 1974 would be a good day to begin, and he warned that once begun, rationing may last three years or longer. The administration is divided on how it is to be arranged. Nixon's domestic adviser, Melvin Laird, Treasury Secretary George Shultz and chief economic adviser Herbert Stein favor indirect rationing of a sort, through heavy federal excise taxes on gas and other scarce fuels. They are probably right that rationing by coupon would be extremely difficult to administer. But the tax answer is also flawed, for without a complex system of credits and rebates it would discriminate against the nonrich. Even if exemptions were given for essential driving and for low-income families (a large task for the bureaucracy), there is no guarantee that wealthier families would drive less. People might prefer to sacrifice in other ways to buy gas. White House energy officials seem to prefer direct rationing with, say, 10-to-15-gallon-per-week quotas similar to those in World

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Conversations in the Court

The Big Sleep

Queen Pat:

The winter's here, the cold is great.
The hills are stripped for miles around
And wood is scarce for fire,
As fodder's for the horse.
I've trimmed the candles,
And had the windows washed,
To make full use of God's own natural heat
And light.

King Richard:

The peasants clamor that
The royal fire should be diminished by
One log, or maybe two. Respect for royalty
Has slipped a notch, I fear,
With parliament and judges in their
powdered wigs
Prepared to claim the power of the Throne.
One joy to me has been the dancing fire,
In season and out, the burning lights
Of blue and red, and yellow best of all.
The cold I hate. The answer to this lack
Of wood is this: all members of the
Kingdom keep
To bed, the blankets high. We'll hibernate
The winter like the bear. Once spring
has come,
The problem gone and long forgotten.
Let's wait for that rebirth. Stir up the fire,
So that I'm heated through and through,
And then to sleep,
Blot out the cold, the lack of heat.
If all join in this saving sleep,
Then we shall rise in time for spring,
We'll wake to warm and happy days.

Queen Pat:

But your nightly dreams sire! How now
Can months in bed but raise their risk?

King Richard:

Throw on more logs! I best stand firm
To guard the land from all mistake.
No sacrifice's too great for me.
Just keep me warm and wide awake.

Robert J. Myers

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War II. Because it is also preferred by Congress' most active energy man, Sen. Henry Jackson, this system now appears to be the one that will be used, even though Nixon calls it a "last resort."

In World War II every car owner was assigned to a local board, classified by need and given coupons entitling him to a weekly ration of gas. Policemen, doctors and clergymen got whatever they wanted; salesmen, enough to drive their routes; commuters, enough to get to work; and everyone else, three gallons. But even in the midst of war and with a popular President, there was widespread cheating. To discourage counterfeiting, the government began printing serial numbers on gas coupons and asking drivers to endorse them. Things went so badly that the director of the Office of Price Administration, Chester Bowles, wrote an article in the Sunday *New York Times*, called "The Deadly Menace of Black Gas." In it he likened gas racketeers to traitors and said that in 1943 the government was losing nearly 2.5 million gallons a day to the black market.

Imagine how much more difficult Mr. Nixon's problem will be. The oil companies are reporting huge profit increases over the last year. Exxon is up 80 percent, Mobil is up 64 percent, Gulf is up 91 percent. The President, whose lack of foresight on energy is shocking, has never been in a weaker position for preaching austerity. Everyone has heard how $10 million in federal money was spent to make his houses in Key Biscayne and San Clemente habitable, and that some of these "security expenses" were for redwood fencing and an electric heating system, as TRB notes in this issue. The President today has at his disposal two Boeing 707s for his own use and others for cabinet members, 16 soundproofed helicopters, 11 Lockheed jetstars for courier duty, two bulletproof limousines, 30 staff cars and a yacht. His Irish setter, King Timahoe, has been chauffeured alone to Camp David. The White House press office says the vehicles are used for official trips only, but here again the credibility of official claims is low indeed.

It is easy to understand why low-income families might greet the energy appeal with a yawn. Rep. Charles Rangel, whose district includes central and east Harlem, thinks it's ironic that people worry about an austere 68-degree thermostat setting. His constituents are happy when they're that warm in winter. The congressman worries that patriotic landlords will dial down to 50 degrees and say the President told them to. Rangel and others have asked the General Accounting Office to keep a record of the President's trips to Key Biscayne, San Clemente and Camp David and calculate how much fuel he burns on these jaunts. It is a niggling point, but it illustrates that political temperatures run high on the question of who will be asked to sacrifice what.

Eliot Marshall

A Case of Misplaced Loyalty

Striking Newspapers

Just the comics, magazine and syndicated portions (printed elsewhere) of Washington's only morning paper were delivered at our door on a recent Saturday, and a telephone call elicited the information that the printers were on strike. We received no paper on Sunday or Monday. The alleged cause was *The Washington Post* management's discharge of a printer who was deliberately stalling, part of a planned slow-down during a period when management and the typographical union were negotiating a new working agreement.

The real issue, which affects virtually all dailies in the United States, is much larger and was pithily summarized by the late columnist Drew Pearson: "Most of the men who work in the mechanical departments do not feel any loyalty to the newspaper. Unlike those in the editorial and news end, the typographers and pressmen are uninterested in the paper's policies, unconcerned with its struggles, indifferent to its successes. Their concern is for their wages and hours. So their loyalty is to the union."

Through the years, this union and the others with which the employees in the newspaper's mechanical departments are affiliated have established and imposed on the managements costly and wasteful featherbedding practices. National advertisers of standard commodities (automobiles, cigarettes, airlines, etc.) in order to secure uniformity, and to obviate printers' or compositors' errors, send their copy in plate form, ready for insertion in the forms from which these are transferred to the presses. But the typographical union requires that the advertisement shall be set in type, proofread, corrected, "made up" and then thrown away, while the plate is actually used. This practice is known as "setting bogus," and imposes heavy costs on the publication.

My views on this issue were crystalized by a personal experience.

Returning to New York after World War I, I was asked by a public spirited Harvard alumnus of Spanish birth, José Camprubi, to assist him in a venture. He wanted to acquire or found a Spanish language daily which would promote better relations between the United States and the Hispanic countries. He decided to buy the weekly *La Prensa*, published in New York, and convert it into a daily. He asked me to manage the project.

The mechanical staff consisted of operators who knew no Spanish. Consequently some glaring typographical errors appeared. The men were not organized—it was an "open" shop. I found that if we organized the composing room we could get some Spanish-speaking or even bilingual compositors and linotypists. This involved a substantial increase in

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cost: the union scale was over twice what the previous management had been paying. I put the problem up to Camprubi, asking him whether he could afford the increased cost for the undoubted improvements that would result. He agreed and there was an immediate improvement.

When Camprubi purchased the plant and newspaper its circulation was only about 6000. Some 5500 went to newsstands and the remaining several hundred were mailed out to individual subscribers. This was done by a single mailer who came to work at nine o'clock six nights in the week and with a little hand-wrapping machine, wrapped and mailed these copies in about an hour. He was paid $18 a week, or the equivalent of $3 an hour, a good wage at that time. No request for a raise had been made.

A week after we had unionized the composing room I was visited by two representatives of the Mailers Union.

"We see you've organized the composin' room" said the spokesman. "You've got to organize the mailin' room."

"What will it cost me?" I asked. Obviously the union scale would be higher.

"The union wage is $35 a week."

"So you want me to pay $35 for what I am now getting for $18."

"It'll cost you more than that," he said.

"How's that?" I asked.

"For the number of papers you're printin' you require two mailers."

"Don't be ridiculous" I retorted; "You have an eight hour day. Our mailer gets done in an hour."

"Them's the union rules," he came back.

"So you want me to pay $70 for what I'm now getting for $18."

"It'll cost you more than that," he asserted.

"How's that?" I asked for the second time.

"When there's two mailers, one of them is a foreman and the foreman's wage is $37.50 a week."

"So you want me to pay $72.50 for what I am now getting for $18?"

"It'll cost you more than that."

"What more can you think of?" I inquired.

"The union day ends at five, and the union night begins at 11. Anything in between is time and a half."

"So you want me to pay $108.75 for what I'm now getting for $18. It's been nice knowing you," I said and got up.

"You better had; you'll be sorry, if you don't," he said.

"Are you threatening me?" I asked.

"You'll see," he said. I soon saw.

The next night, sabotage of our newsstand deliveries began. Our papers were thrown off the delivery trucks and from the newsstands.

Camprubi was outraged. "To hell with those union bastards" he said. "I won't be blackmailed. We'll de-unionize the composing room. I don't care how many typographical errors we make. I won't submit to such outrageous extortion." And it was done. The union linotypers were dropped. Shortly thereafter, the unions started a Spanish-speaking daily to compete with *La Prensa*. It was short-lived.

This kind of extortion by the mechanical departments—paralleled by assigning more pressmen to each press than are needed—has been largely responsible for the consolidation, elimination and extinction of newspapers. It is a tragic blow at the democratic process that requires the public be properly informed and that there be the diversity of opinion in editorial treatment and news coverage that several newspapers under different managements offer. The diminution in number of newspapers, to the point where in most American cities there is but one daily, or maybe a morning and evening paper under the same management—and the trend has not yet run its course—has been ascribed to the advent and competition of radio and television. No doubt these compete heavily with newspapers, both in news coverage and for advertising revenue. But radio and television were insignificant half a century ago when the decline of dailies was well under way. The strikes initiated by the well-paid mechanical department workers on newspapers have serious consequences far beyond the diminution of sales in department stores and lesser mercantile establishments. When newspapers are forced to suspend publication—even temporarily—as has happened to *The New York Times* and other dailies in recent years—plays are not reviewed and their runs are short-lived to the injury of the playwright, producer, actors and others—not to mention the unionized stagehands; books are not reviewed, with the same damage to the authors and publishers. A newspaper strike differs in its effects from one in a brick plant or steel mill where the interruption of production results in little permanent damage and the costs, if the strike's objectives are secured, merely passed on to the public.

But when as is often the case as a result of these practices, a newspaper "folds," a whole category of professional or semi-professional workers is thrown out of employment, not temporarily but often permanently. Editorial writers, reporters, special feature writers, columnists, cartoonists, photographers, are left stranded with no place to go. The mechanical department employees may suffer equally. While printers can usually find work in bookprinting, the pressmen cannot.

In the case of *La Prensa*, I might have been willing to pay the $35 wage demanded, a virtual doubling of the cost. I was strongly sympathetic with the organized labor movement, having noted the ruthless exploitation of the textile workers in Lawrence and other New England cities and the general plight of most wage earners when I was getting my first education in labor-

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industry relations. It had become clear to me that the organized labor movement had done much to lessen economic injustices. But the rapacity and the unjustifiability of the Mailers Union's demands on that occasion made yielding obviously impossible.

At that time, 1919, there were some 16 dailies in New York, some of them great newspapers with achievements of historic import, papers that carried on determined crusades in the public interest, at times altering the course of history and furnishing the public with a choice and variety of editorial opinion and news presentation without which our country is poorer today. They included the *Times*, which fortunately has survived, the *Tribune*, the *World* morning and evening, the *Sun* morning and evening, the *Globe*, the *Evening Post*, the *Mail*, the *Express*, the *Record*, the *Herald*, the *Journal*, the *American*, the *Telegram*, the *Telegraph* and the *Brooklyn Eagle*. As I write this New York has for years been reduced to the *Times* and two tabloids, the *News* and *Post*, the latter an excellent daily.

When John Hay Whitney purchased the New York *Herald Tribune* from the Reids his purpose was to keep alive that historically Republican newspaper and restore its prestige to the days of Horace Greeley and Whitelaw Reid. It was no secret that it was losing money heavily and that Whitney was pouring millions of dollars into it with little or no prospect of financial returns, but the unions not only insisted on their feather-bedding practices but sought to augment them until after months of strike he finally felt obliged to quit, and cause the unemployment not only of that dedicated coterie of writers who sought to make journalism a profession but of the mechanical department workers who had called the strike and dug their own unemployment graves.

The Washington Post wild-cat strike was fortunately short-lived. But wouldn't it be nice if the unionized mechanical department employees of the paper abandoned their indifference to their newspaper's editorial policies, its journalistic battles, and like the news and editorial staffs rejoiced in its victories and took pride in being part of an organization that could record so stellar an achievement as the exposure of Watergate, and the consequent redirection of the national purpose toward the basic principles of "government by consent of the governed" and of a "government of laws, not of men." By thus reversing their attitudes these unionists could in principle, at least, compensate for the half million dollar loss their strike imposed on the *Post* and atone for the window smashing and stoning that marred the presentation of their case.

Ernest Gruening

MR. GRUENING, *former senator from Alaska, founded the* Portland, Maine Evening News, *was editor of* The Nation *and of the* New York Evening Post. *His autobiography,* Many Battles, *has just been published by Liveright.*

The Nixon Watch

Counterattack

On the afternoon of November 8, the day after Mr. Nixon acknowledged at the end of a televised speech about the energy crisis that "great numbers of Americans have had doubts raised about the integrity of the President of the United States" and declared that he had "no intention whatever" of resigning, one of his senior assistants said three times during a 40-minute conversation that he was sure that the President could solve his problems of confidence and authority "if he wanted to." The suggestion, twice repeated, that Mr. Nixon might not "want to" caused me to ask the assistant whether he was implying a doubt that the President really wanted and intended to stick it out. Oh no, the assistant said; all he meant was that he wasn't sure that the President was willing to do the particular things that the assistant thought he'd have to do in order to halt the erosion of trust. A similar experience on the same afternoon with another assistant who was assigned to think up suggestions for the President and didn't know how they were being received provided a further measure of the uneasiness and uncertainty that pervaded the Nixon White House behind the President's announced determination to meet his appalling array of Watergate problems "head on."

A minor reason for the unease around the President was his isolation from most of his staff, including most of his senior staff. It continued to be true, as I've been reporting since last summer, that the only assistants with whom he regularly spent useful amounts of time were General Alexander Haig, the staff chief who replaced H. R. Haldeman last May, and Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, who actually functioned as a press secretary and spokesman for a few days in early November but since last July has served the President mostly in private as a trusted and trusting friend and listener. It was said for Mr. Nixon, and truly enough, that he'd always been that way, preferring to deal directly with as few people as he possibly could and, before the Watergate storm hit him and his White House last April 30, relying upon Haldeman and the departed John Ehrlichman much as he relies now upon Haig and Ziegler. But the explanation didn't suffice. In a time of stress and doubt, extending from the inner White House to the nation at large, too many ranking assistants knew only second hand, through Haig and Ziegler, or didn't know at all what their President was planning and thinking and how he was bearing up. His isolation from them made them more vulnerable than they otherwise would have been to a couple of far more serious causes of uneasiness and uncertainty.

One cause was a fear amounting to an assumption that the worst of the Watergate scandals were yet to

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break upon the President and them. The numbing succession of scandals and allegations of scandal that had already struck was enough in itself to account for the assumption that the crushing sequence couldn't have ended and was never going to end. But a related and, for the President and for the morale of the Nixon establishment, a more disastrous factor underlay the tensions and anxieties. The clear though unacknowledged fact was that confidence in the President's integrity and wisdom had all but vanished among his own assistants. Nothing else could explain the fact that the most emphatic assertions in private of belief that the President was going to survive the scandals, the demands for his resignation and the threats of impeachment invariably ended with some such remark as, "That is, of course, if something else doesn't break." Counsellor Melvin Laird, the former congressman and secretary of Defense who joined the White House staff in July and is saying that he's quitting as soon as Gerald Ford, the President's nominee for Vice President to succeed Spiro Agnew, is confirmed by majorities of the House and Senate, contributed to the apprehension of dire things to come with an argument that he is using on senators and representatives. He tells Republicans and Democrats alike that they've got to confirm Gerald Ford without delay because another Watergate crunch, maybe worse than any yet experienced, is coming soon. He is saying that a confirmed Vice President ought to be in place when it does, ready to help the President withstand it. Laird doesn't quite say in addition that a Republican Vice President has got to be in office, ready to replace Mr. Nixon when and if he resigns or is impeached and removed. But that's the impression he leaves.

At meetings with 192 House Republicans and later with some 30 of the most influential Republican congressmen, the key question thrown at Counsellor Bryce Harlow about the President's plight and prospects was, "Can he govern?" Harlow recalls that he answered the question approximately as follows: "I can't answer that. The President can't answer it. Only you gentlemen can answer it. If you stay with him, stand by him, support him—*of course he can govern.* If you don't stay with him, if you desert him—of course he can't govern." At the time in early November, Harlow was hoping that the President would go on the counteroffensive, holding more and regular press conferences; answering a particular Watergate or Watergate-related charge at each press session and inviting questions on any and all other charges; show himself in Washington and around the country in the act of being an aggressive and confident President; and, beyond all else, have members of Congress, singly and in groups, at the White House to see him and go to them on Capitol Hill, talking and listening to them and showing them that he cared about them. Well into the first fortnight of November, Harlow hadn't discussed these ideas directly with the President. Neither had Patrick Buchanan, who was thinking along the same lines and firing memos to the President through General Haig. The President took Harlow with him to Florida on November 1, talked briefly with him on the presidential plane en route from and back to Washington, and didn't see or speak to him during four days at Key Biscayne. Harlow isn't saying what they talked about on the plane, except that it wasn't his ideas for defensive counterattack. Close to a week after the return, Harlow still hadn't had or made a chance to discuss his ideas with the President. But, perhaps proving that direct access isn't all that vital in the Nixon scheme of things, the President suddenly began acting as Harlow and Buchanan, among others, had hoped he would. He popped up at a Nevada State Society dinner in honor of Pat Nixon and at a birthday party for retiring Republican Senator Wallace Bennett of Utah. He invited the Republican National Committee's coordinating committee to the White House for breakfast and a 45-minute monologue and had in batches of Republican senators and representatives for lengthy question-and-answer sessions. Judging from the accounts that came out of the closed meetings, the President assured his guests that he was going to prove his innocence by telling all without telling them much more than that he was going to tell all in other forums at other times.

If the kind of disclosure that Mr. Nixon and his press secretary practiced on November 12 is an indicator of what's to come, it won't do the President the good he professes to believe it will. In essence he could do no more than assert as his spokesmen previously had that two of nine White House tapes that he was under court order to give federal Judge John Sirica were unavailable because the conversations in question had not been recorded. He also had to confess that a belt from a dictation machine, on which he and his spokesmen had previously and repeatedly said he had dictated his own account of one of the untaped conversations, was not in the file where the President thought it was and therefore could not be submitted to Judge Sirica. Mr. Nixon's dictated recollection wouldn't have been worth much as evidence, at best, but this latest claim that evidence once said to exist couldn't be found knocked another hole in what remained of the President's credibility. Press Secretary Ziegler was closer to open panic than I've previously seen him when he begged reporters to "give us at least a chance" and include the President's explanation in accounts of the dictation belt. An odd thing about that explanation is that the President didn't say he never dictated the account. He said only that the belt wasn't found where he'd thought it was. He left Ziegler to say it couldn't be found because it never existed.

John Osborne

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Game for Grownups

Watergate Teasers

by Walter Pincus

When did H. R. Haldeman first listen to a White House tape recording and what was taped?

Lawrence Higby, Haldeman's former chief assistant, told the Sirica court that sometime in the "second week of April" 1973, Haldeman asked him to get "one tape." Higby forwarded that request to Stephen Bull, President Nixon's aide who had responsibility for the tapes. Higby further recalled that Haldeman went into a private room off Higby's office for several hours to listen to the tape he received, emerging with the complaint that he needed some earphones because the different volume levels required him to boost the sound to where it might be heard outside the room.

Haldeman told the Senate Watergate Committee in August that in "the latter part of April" (1973), he listened to a March 21, 1973 conversation between the President and then White House counsel John Wesley Dean III (which Haldeman joined in part). One of Haldeman's lawyers fixed the listening date at April 15 or April 16. When Haldeman later appeared before Judge Sirica, he could not pin down the date. Bull previously had testified *he* thought it was April 22. A Secret Service log, drawn up from the haphazard scraps of paper used to record the withdrawal and returns of White House tapes from a vault, showed April 25, 1973 as the date of the first tape removals. Higby, upon being shown that Secret Service log, still stuck to his story that the first "tape listening took place earlier in the month" of April.

The imprecision gets more imprecise. Bull testified that "Mr. Haldeman, upon emerging from the President's office [April 22] into my office which is contiguous to the Oval Office requested that I provide him with certain tapes . . . I do not recall whether he gave it [the request] to me verbally [*sic*] and I wrote it down, or he gave me a list." Higby, it should be remembered, had said the tape request came to *him* from Haldeman, not to Bull, and was for just one specific tape. The Secret Service log shows 22 tapes, covering March 12, 1973 through March 23, 1973 conversations, were delivered to Bull on April 25.

On April 15 the President learned from Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen of Dean's statements to the federal prosecutors implicating Haldeman and Ehrlichman in the Watergate cover-up. That afternoon after meeting with the President, Ehrlichman summoned Dean to the White House. Dean refused. Through the intervention of Petersen, a meeting was instead arranged for later that evening between Dean and the President, for the specific purpose of having Dean tell Mr. Nixon what he had been telling the prosecutors. Prior to seeing Dean that night the President met with Haldeman and Ehrlichman for almost an hour and a half.

Dean and the President had 55 minutes together. Dean testified before the Ervin committee that the President's questions gave him the impression he was being taped. Four minutes after Dean left, Haldeman and Ehrlichman returned to the President's office for another talk. It lasted 59 minutes. On that occasion did the President play a tape of the meeting he had just had with Dean? Three days later, when the question arose as to whether Dean had been offered immunity for his testimony, the President blurted out to Petersen that Dean had told him he had immunity. "I have it on tape if you want to hear it," Nixon told Petersen.

Why has Haldeman shown such a strong aversion to the suggestion that he listened to a March 13, 1973 conversation between the President and Dean, at which Haldeman was present for 12 minutes?

In his November 12 statement Mr. Nixon said his "primary purpose" in asking Haldeman to listen to the March 21 conversation was "to confirm my recollection that March 21, 1973, was the date on which John Dean had *first* reported certain facts to me." Simple logic would argue that in order to establish the "first" time something was told the President, Haldeman would have had to listen to *all* the President's meetings with Dean that preceded March 21. If that was Haldeman's purpose in late April, the 22 tapes listed by the Secret Service as having been turned over April 25 and again April 26 would be the ones to review. They covered March 12, 1973 through March 22, 1973—the key period for meetings on Watergate between Dean and the President. (The two did not meet again after March 22, until the night of April 15.) Haldeman persists in saying he only listened to one, March 21. Why only that one?

Dean informed the Ervin committee that on March

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13 he explained to the President that money demands were being made by the Watergate defendants and that one million dollars might be needed. Dean said "the President then referred to the fact that Hunt had been promised executive clemency. . . ." (With the April 15 tape missing, that alleged March 13 statement becomes the only direct link between the President and the cover-up still to be found on the tapes.) Now the March 13 tape was one of those 22 supposedly provided Haldeman in late April. Why didn't he play it, so that he could find out what Dean *had* said that day? Ironically that same March 13 tape was among the nine tapes provided Haldeman in early July, according to the Secret Service log. But Haldeman maintains that at that time, in July, he again only listened to one tape—the one of September 15, 1972. The senators asked Haldeman why he had not listened to the March 13 tape. He said he had not because he was present at that meeting for only a few minutes. Asked again, he said "[March 13] was—that may have been one of the meetings of the tapes that the President listened to himself." Still again, Haldeman explained that he had "several other tapes in my possession at that time of other meetings which it had also been suggested or requested that I review, but I did not listen because I believe they involved, I think all of them involved, meetings at which I had not been in attendance at any time, any part of the time." The senators did not know at the time what tapes Haldeman had, or that five of them were for key Dean meetings he had attended, and that one of those tapes was that of March 13. Later Haldeman was asked by Ervin committee counsel Samuel Dash whether he recalled having the March 13 tape. He replied: "That may have been one but I am not sure."

In his appearance before Judge Sirica, Haldeman remained cagey about the March 13 tape. He repeated that in July he decided not to listen to tapes of meetings he had not attended. Confronted with the fact he had been listed on the President's log as attending the March 13 meeting, he responded, "I had forgotten. That was the meeting that there was some discrepancy as to my attendance at." In fact the discrepancy was over how long he attended the March 21 meeting, the one he did listen to! In cross-examination Haldeman took another position on the March 13 tape: "I don't know that I knew at the time [in July when he had possession of the tape] that I had been at the meeting."

Haldeman in his July 31 Ervin committee testimony did not hesitate, however, to suggest that "Mr. Dean drew the erroneous conclusion that the President was fully knowledgeable of the cover-up *at the time of the March 13 meeting* in the sense of being aware that money had been paid for silence and that the money demands could reach a million dollars and that the President said that was no problem. He [Dean] drew his conclusion from a hypothetical discussion of questions, since the President told me later that he had no intention to do anything whatever about money and had no knowledge of the so-called cover-up." How could Haldeman testify on such details of the March 13 conversation—even to the point of talking about "a hypothetical discussion" that day—when he had not heard the tape and, as he said elsewhere in his testimony, had no memory or notes of what happened that day?

How accurate are the Secret Service logs on the White House tapes?

The 22 tapes delivered to Bull at 11 am on April 26, 1973 were not returned to the Secret Service vault, according to the log, until May 2, 1973 at 5:05 pm. Haldeman told Judge Sirica he returned them almost immediately after listening to the March 21 conversation a second time, using earphones to handle the changing volume. (Haldeman had told the Ervin committee he listened to the tape "once" and "did not replay it.") Bull testified he believed he sent the tapes to the vault immediately after getting them back from Haldeman. Where were they during the extra days—or is the log faulty?

The President's executive assistant, Rose Mary Woods, testified she did not hear of any missing taped conversations during her September 29-30, 1973 weekend at Camp David. But Bull, who was with her that weekend, testified he told the President in Miss Woods' presence that he could not find the April 15 conversation. And, added Bull, "at that time I indicated, I believe, to Miss Woods, what I thought to be the reason it [the April 15 tape] trailed off."

General Charles Bennett, deputy assistant to the President, is on record as saying he took control of the tapes July 18, 1973, on behalf of the President. Asked if he was required to keep a log of who received tapes, Bennett said he was not, but he kept notes so that he would be able to testify should the occasion arise. Yet the first page of Bennett's notes lists among his duties: "Keep a record" and "Record names of those concerned."

Haldeman testified that the President in late April had discussed the White House tapes in front of Ehrlichman. That, according to Haldeman's "recollection" was how his colleague became aware of the recording system. Last July 31, however, Haldeman told the Ervin committee that *he* had been chosen to listen to tapes earlier that month, because "Mr. Ehrlichman, I do not believe was aware of the existence of them."

Judge Sirica has yet to get a report from a panel of technical experts on whether those tapes still called for by subpoena and available have been doctored in any way. He will then determine what, if anything, should be done further. But conflicts in already taken testimony raise enough serious questions to require full investigation by a specially empaneled grand jury.

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Where Do We Go from Here?

The Democratic Party

by Morris K. Udall

"I belong to the increasing body of Americans who cannot forget that parties are instruments." —Felix Frankfurter

"I belong to no organized political party, I'm a democrat." —Will Rogers

It is a mistake to think that grim news for the Republicans is good news for Democrats. I don't believe that Republican troubles *guarantee* Democrats the two-thirds congressional majority in 1974 needed to override vetoes, or a Democratic take-over of the White House in 1976. Unless the Democratic Party can get itself together, it will be no better able to pick up the political pieces than a man with a broken back and no hands.

As we turn the corner into 1974 we Democrats are getting along better than we did a year or two ago, but we're still arguing over party rules and assigning guilt for previous defeats. And meanwhile a gathering storm that threatens the stability of the nation goes almost unnoticed. Consider:

► The climax of an 18-month attack in the international market which left that worldwide symbol of value and stability—the US dollar—minus 30 percent of its purchasing power in foreign countries;
► A President who, glimpsing light at the end of the tunnel, released the economy from controls only to find, instead of light, another tunnel. Inflation is running amok; this year's price rise could by itself exceed that of the five-year period 1961-66;
► An administration that in the last five years has allowed us to stumble into an energy crisis that will close factories and schools and leave millions of homes unheated this winter—and, in all likelihood, produce gas rationing, more inflation and further devaluations of the dollar in the months ahead;
► A new war in the Mideast that shook liberal (and now Nixon) theories of détente, at a time when worldwide shortages of basic materials raised serious concerns about future relations with our traditional allies;
► The possibility for the first time in our history that the two highest offices in the land could in close succession be vacated by incumbents under fire, resulting in the speaker of the House succeeding to the presidency. All that, plus near collapse of confidence at home in the honor and competence of the highest officers of our government—a collapse that inevitably undermines the confidence of governments abroad in the leadership and stability of the United States.

Buried in the debris of 1973 is a political system that has been corrupted by money, a bloated economy that has been tranquilized into a false sense of security by a drug named "growth," a high level of technology and leisure that has run out of cheap energy, and a foreign policy that still innocently assumes that Americans can impose conditions on other nations that we ourselves will not accept. I have no doubt of our national resilience. But it must be said that by the fall of 1973 the ingenuity and optimism that within three decades helped save the world from Hitler, rebuilt Europe, and opened the frontier of space are less visible than at any time since the Great Depression.

I don't claim to have the answers, but let me suggest, in necessarily sketchy fashion, the dimensions of a national dialogue that must begin immediately.

In 1972 about 45 percent of all eligible adults failed to turn up at the polls, the worst showing in 25 years. There were more eligible voters who failed to register an opinion than those who cast ballots for President Nixon. To their ranks we must now add a new group: actively *cynical* voters turned off by the hypocrisy of the last decade and now repelled by Watergate and the Agnew scandal. These are educated, independent, opinion leaders; their votes have often determined the outcome of elections. If they bail out of the system—and the indicators are more ominous than most politicians want to believe—representative government will be in worse shape than it is today. At a minimum their cynicism could spell the end of the two-party system, opening the door to splinter parties and bitter ideological rifts. I seriously question whether America would be governable under such conditions.

The immediate Democratic response ought to be twofold. First, we ought to press the Congress for at least some modest public contribution to campaign financing, and we ought to limit the clout of private donors (labor as well as corporations), and put an end to election by television commercials. The failure of the Democratic leadership to seize this issue would be a historic blunder, but it hasn't grabbed it yet. Earlier this year the Senate put public finance on the back burner, while approving reforms in the current system that opponents claim favor incumbents. The House

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MORRIS K. UDALL *is the US representative from the second district of Arizona.*

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didn't even schedule hearings on the subject until late in the year, virtually ruling out floor action until sometime in 1974, when then-active candidates will drag out the old complaint that "you can't change the rules in the middle of the game." The cold fact is that if Congress does nothing substantial about campaign financing in this year of Watergate, we won't have substantial reform in this decade.

A very large number of election day "no shows" don't vote because they can't. They are victims of a weird maze of registration laws. We ought to have some kind of universal registration; government ought to *care* whether you vote or not and try to make it easy. Here again universal voter registration proposals are having tough sledding in the Congress.

Election reform is not only desirable for its own sake but as the first step to the kind of tax reform and health insurance policies the working man is rightfully demanding. Despite the labor hall oratory of congressional and presidential candidates, neither program has gone anywhere precisely because the current system depends upon the largess of the one economic segment of our society that stands to lose by their adoption. The political necessity of such changes will be made apparent to both parties only when through a measure of public financing, campaign costs are underwritten by a broader base of small contributors.

Democrats don't have the answers to Mr. Nixon's economic dilemma—not yet. But we know, or should, that the Democratic wisdom of the 1960s known as "the new economics" is largely "inoperative." Gone are the days when US products were unrivaled in the world market, when our supplies of basic materials seemed unlimited, when we thought wages and profits could soar while inflation remained under control and the dollar stable. No one likes to talk about this, but some fundamental changes lie immediately ahead.

It is easier to say what went wrong than how to right it. Some of the trouble is attributable to the ingenuity of our competitors, principally the Germans and Japanese, who rebounded from World War II with phenomenal economic and technological growth. But there were other things that were within our control. There was the assumption made somewhere along the line that it was America's duty to garrison the globe, with troops and bases in 100 countries. Our fear of the Soviet Union nourished an outsized military establishment. We got sucked deeper and deeper into the endless and costly Vietnam war. Intoxicated with success and seemingly unlimited profits and higher wages, American labor became less productive than their counterparts in other nations. Big business grew bigger, and we slipped into conglomerate arrangements that vitiated competition in vital industries and built unnecessary inflation into the economy. We degraded our environment, for which we are now paying, and we let a few shortsighted companies shape an energy policy that is now little short of a national disaster. A decade ago, how many of us thought we would live to see the time when the disclaimer "Made in Japan" lent prestige to products, and when in the international market the yen and mark were preferred to the dollar?

What is to be done? As a start we need to restore competition in the "big sector" of industry. We may have to move against some conglomerates and get a handle on largely ungoverned multinationals. Rather than looking for ways to protect companies like ITT, Congress and the next administration ought to take a hard look at mergers and anti-competitive practices.

Our next step should be to turn the American farmers loose. For three decades we've had farm surpluses and programs to depress production. And yet last year farmers exported $12 billion worth of products and our balance-of-payments situation would have been even more disastrous without them. Agriculture has long been the sick man of our economy; now it can help save us.

We ought to reorder federal priorities or stop using the cliché. If we can't have all our space and military programs and still provide ourselves with adequate education and health, we have to decide which comes first. We have got to rid ourselves of the kind of mixed-up economic policies that have given us $100 billion worth of federal deficits in four years, adding immeasurably to the pressures on the dollar. We may have to give the federal government new authority to enforce a reasonable income policy on major industries. Large price increases and wage settlements in the years ahead may have to be submitted to a bipartisan economic board that can jawbone, and delay if necessary, unwarranted profits and wages.

Perhaps most important, we must do more than we're doing to get labor and management back on the same team. Incentives *are* the cornerstone of our economy. We might do well to imitate the Japanese who have made the assembly line worker part of the "corporate family" through such devices as lifetime jobs, profit sharing, secure pensions and representation on corporate policy boards.

Finally, we are becoming a nation of liberal arts majors with too few skilled tradesmen and women—carpenters, plumbers, electricians and so on. We want our children to have a better life, and since the 1950s the symbol of that life has been a college diploma. Too often we have assumed that a young man or woman enters a trade only because he or she is not smart enough to do anything else; trade education has been a symbol of failure. But by reducing the proportion of youth entering the trades, we pay a high economic price in terms of the strain on basic services, reduced competition, higher costs, and a decline in the quality of workmanship. Meanwhile the market for college graduates is glutted, portending an angry, overtrained generation. We must develop a post-secondary educa-

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tion scheme that puts the young blue-collar worker on a par with the potential college student.

No discussion of the economy of the 1970s makes sense without reference to the related problems of learning to live lean. There are abundant warning signs that we are coming to the end of an era of cheap resources; we are running out of petroleum, land, minerals, water and raw materials. In a drive to fuel the engines of gross growth, we have in the past quarter century skimmed the cream of US resources. The environmentalists are right. An era of shortages (and, hopefully, of resource recycling) is at hand. The straight facts are these:

► We are six percent of the people on this planet but each year consume at least one-third of the energy and other resources in the world. We waste more energy than Japan annually consumes;

► This administration had pretended for two years that the energy crisis was not serious, thereby putting us in such a vulnerable position that the Arabs' "oil weapon" will have a devastating impact on our lives and our economy this winter. They would not go to the country with an old-fashioned policy of belt-tightening conservation until a cocked gun was already at our heads.

► We will encounter similar scarcities in paper, copper, zinc, even water. Of the 13 basic minerals, the US is currently totally dependent on foreign supplies for four, and that could be up to 10 in the foreseeable future.

During the last 30 years the American economy was a golden-egg-laying goose. The magic word was "growth" and the slogan, particularly of the Democratic Party, was "more!" And why not? Growth meant an ever bigger pie, more for labor, more for management, for everyone. Bigger and faster (cars, SSTs, etc.) were better. This joyride was fun while it lasted, but we're coming to the end of grosser and grosser GNP expansion. That doesn't mean an end to "progress," but waste will have to be eliminated, and efficiency and conservation must become the national creed. We need leaders who promise *less*, who discourage wasteful throwaway products, big gas-guzzling cars and electrical gadgets, energy-eating office buildings and poorly insulated homes, neon lights and other extravagances with no redeeming social value, a one-person-one-auto transportation system that has destroyed our sense of community, advertising that promotes energy overuse.

At the same time we need a crash national effort, more ambitious than the space program of the 1960s, to develop promising new alternative energy sources such as solar, geothermal, coal gasification and liquefaction for the 21st century. The President's breast beating notwithstanding, such a program might already be underway but for the shortsightedness of his administration, as evidenced as late as this June by official testimony before my subcommittee in stern opposition to a "Project Independence" program.

As we begin to feel the impact of shortages, I hope the Democratic Party will avoid two errors, the hint of which pervaded the belated Nixon energy appeal. First is the misplaced faith that technology will bail us out, somehow, just before disaster. We risk catastrophe if a blind confidence in technology lulls us into procrastinating. We are foolish to believe any longer that technological tricks can relieve us of our need to husband our nonrenewable resources.

The second error is to retreat from our commitment to clean water and air, to go ahead damming wild rivers and desecrating wilderness and national parks. Some short-term trade-offs may be required, but when the tough decisions come, it would be folly to abandon environmental reforms. If we are sensible, we can balance our resource budget and remain respectful of nature's laws.

The problem of scarcity leads me to some final suggestions about our role in a shrinking world. Fortunately we are leaving behind us a foreign policy that for the last 25 years has been based on ideological confrontation—though the withdrawal symptoms are still with us as indicated by the ordering of a worldwide nuclear alert in response to vague reports of possible Soviet moves in the Middle East. As the result of our unhappy Vietnam experience, it is good politics to talk about letting other nations fend for themselves. That line, carried too far, is as dangerous as the overambitious globalism of the '60s.

Although proclaimed as a break with a past of overinvolvement in the affairs of other nations, the Nixon Doctrine—far from shedding the burden of costly military aid programs—has resulted in huge arms subsidies for undemocratic governments and military tyrants. Abroad, particularly in the third world, we are perceived as having abandoned any pretext of exercising moral force in the conduct of our foreign policy. And we must remember that in the decade ahead our fate will be tied more than ever to the judgments of that world community, because of the scarcity of natural resources if for no other reason.

"Growth" or "the good life" has been possible for Americans only while much of the rest of the world was underfed and underdeveloped. But expectations *are* rising everywhere. European economies are booming, and new forces in Japan and the Common Market mean an end to the days when the United States dominated international trade. The rest of the world will no longer be indifferent to Americans consuming, as we do each year, 55 percent of all the gasoline in the world!

I suspect that Mr. Nixon's foreign policy, like his presidency, is transitional. The Nixon-Kissinger globetrotting summitry has produced solid achievements, and Democrats should admit it, but perhaps not as uncritically as some do. The costs of a foreign policy triumph are not often immediately apparent to the

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startled citizenry—as we are now made ruefully aware in the case of the Russian wheat deal and in Vietnam where the January "peace settlement" has brought no peace and still costs us over $10 billion annually.

In the same vein, we should not be too sure that multipolar, big-power diplomacy is desirable no matter how skillfully played. Given the serious potential of the growing Soviet-Chinese conflict, how much do we really want to be involved? And was it such a great accomplishment for Richard Nixon to end a war only after having doubled its length or cost, or to reestablish relations with China after having helped prevent them for two decades?

Big-power, showboat diplomacy may lead us to ignore less exotic but equally pressing problems at home. And there is evidence to suggest the Nixon spectaculars have diverted attention from a whole range of imperatives that will control our international relations throughout the next two decades. I would like to suggest five changes that are on the horizon:

First, it is necessary and desirable that policy decisions no longer be geared to a reactive crisis orientation. It is the kind of bad management that under the strain of one crisis spawns others because of neglect—one is driven from our consciousness without the first having been resolved. The pollution crisis is overtaken by the energy crisis, the Watergate tapes crisis by the Middle East crisis, and so on, *ad infinitum.*

Second, as stated, the energy binge is over. With the advent of worldwide shortages, we cannot expect to retain friendly relations with traditional allies—already on the decline—or avoid costly and dangerous trade wars if we don't get over our self-indulgence. We must increase productivity, control inflation, and cut the fat from our natural resource budget. Our reward will be a stabilized dollar, competitive exports, lower prices and friendlier neighbors.

A requirement of such a policy is, thirdly, that we begin to get a hold on the military behemoth created during the Cold War. Most Americans no longer see much sense in 400 overseas bases and half a million troops and dependents in Europe, in a single submarine that costs a billion dollars, or in a military airplane that ends up costing 30 to 50 percent more than the contractor promised. They wonder when the time will ever be "right" for the military to tighten its belt on weapon systems that double and redouble our unquestioned ability to incinerate the planet. Yet most politicians seem to shrink from reasonable cuts, as the fall of each even-numbered year approaches. For this procrastination we will pay an unacceptable price in energy lost to the rest of society and dollars lost for needed programs like national health insurance.

Fourth, we must put our manic-depressive relations with other superpowers in perspective. Détente is our goal, but we must understand the two levels of negotiation that are involved. First is the effort to avoid holocaust, slow the mad arms race, and avoid confrontation. On that level, we should be prepared to negotiate with the devil. The second level has to do with aid, trade, communication and ultimately interdependence—the détente which the Nixon administration is currently preaching. At this level we must decide if it is proper, and I believe it is, to seek basic humanitarian concessions from governments whose disregard for human rights is contrary to our deepest beliefs.

Finally, we have to reestablish our moral credentials. Our position in bargaining for human rights is greatly weakened by our treatment of our own minorities. For this state of affairs, history will deal harshly with Richard Nixon and with Congress whose contribution to racial equality during the last five years has been to dump the problem back on the branch least able to deal with it, the courts. The good news here is that there are still millions of black and white Americans who believe in an integrated society and are willing to make reasonable sacrifices and adjustments. Progress will require a measure of courage on their part and on the part of those representing them in Congress; it will also require that civil rights leaders turn away from the courts as their only salvation and busing orders as their chief weapon. The Democratic Party once led the country toward integration and racial harmony; it can begin to do so again by advancing initiatives that transcend the lost debate over busing and by devising multifaceted methods tailored to the needs of each community.

Those same polls that reflect Republican misfortune tell us that the country does not look upon a Democratic government as the obvious, desired alternative. Many elements of the old labor-ethic-Southern blocs who left the party in 1968 and 1972 have not yet "come home." Even when they were together Democrats did not fare well in presidential politics. Since 1944 our so-called "majority" party hasn't had more than 50 percent of the vote, except in the Johnson landslide year, while Republicans reached majority status three times. We have lost four of the last seven presidential contests!

Admiring as I am of the job Chairman Strauss has done in refereeing the current intraparty power struggle, I can't help wondering if this does not appear to the country like Nero fiddling. Attention to party rules and procedures will have an impact on who is selected for the Democratic nomination, but programs and policies will decide that nomination's worth. Within the ranks of the Democratic Party are many of the country's best minds, and we should call them to the front. We need emergency task forces on the economy, environment, foreign policy, racial problems, campaign and governmental reform. We need responsible, consensus policies in all of these areas that our congressmen, governors and mayors can support. Such policies are the beginning of a new unity, rather than the product of it.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Killings and Cultures

Executive Action (National General). What is this picture *for?* It deals with the assassination of President Kennedy and, in quasi-documentary fashion, presents one more conspiracy theory. There were three assassins, it says, and a look-alike for Lee Harvey Oswald to lead the police to Oswald as patsy (who called himself a patsy). But the shooting of a policeman led the police to Oswald anyway.

Unlike some articles and books, the film doesn't even really present this theory. It starts with a note saying that this conspiracy *could* have existed. Yes, and JFK could also have been shot by Martians in an invisible flying saucer. Just try to prove that he wasn't.

The script was co-authored by Mark Lane, who has been busy in this field for some time, and the film has been crisply directed, acted and edited. The hypothesis is that some very rich men (Robert Ryan and Will Geer) hire a skilled operator (Burt Lancaster) to plan the killing, to protect the US from "mongrelization" of races, submission to the USSR in the nuclear race, etc. Psychohistorically, this is tenable enough because, as Richard Hofstadter said, most American political violence has been initiated with a conservative bias. But after its pussyfooting nonclaim to explanation, the film has no grounds for existence except to be the first thriller about the most shocking single event since World War II. Who needs it?

Certainly there are many odd facts and anomalous coincidences about the JFK killing. So are there about the Lincoln killing. (See *Why Was Lincoln Murdered?* by Otto Eisenschiml, Little, Brown, 1973.) The hanging of the four conspirators in the Lincoln death didn't remotely answer all those questions any more than Jack Ruby's murder of Oswald settled the questions in the JFK matter. But to make a film about the Dallas events without real intent to answer those questions, simply playing with the gaps and oddities in the story, seems to me pretty cool. And monstrously inopportune. Aren't we having enough presidential troubles at the moment?

Charley Varrick (Universal). Fictional killings are much more fun—when well done. All you need to do is integrate the violence into suspense and drama. If the film isn't intrinsically engaging, the violence seems egregious, possibly offensive. If the film engages, the violence is exciting. Most of the critics who bellyached about *Straw Dogs* were ecstatic about *The Godfather.*

Charley Varrick is a good one. It was directed by Don Siegel, a great favorite of the *auteur* critics, and it proves that there's nothing wrong with an *auteur* director that a good script can't cure. When Siegel directs grotesque flapdoodle like *Two Mules for Sister Sara* or *Dirty Harry,* we are enjoined to watch his style. When he gets a good script like this one by Howard Rodman and Dean Riesner (from a novel by John Reese), we don't have to be enjoined to watch anything; we can't *help* watching. And the violence loses most of its moral discomfort as it becomes dramatic necessity.

This is the best crime thriller since *The French Connection.* It's about a middle-aged, thoughtful, but fast-moving bank robber who, with his wife and two pals, knocks off a rural New Mexico bank expecting to take some thousands. Wife and one pal are killed, along with some cops. Varrick and the other survivor escape with their haul, to find that they have taken over three-quarters of a million. Varrick is very worried.

He suspects—and it's confirmed by the bank's report of only a small loss—that this is Mafia money, dropped in a country bank en route to foreign investment. Varrick isn't worried about the police; he knows they can tire in time. He knows that the Mafia never gives up. His job is to make the Mafia think they've rubbed out the robbers before they reach him. How he does it is the gist of a fast and clever script whose surprises are retrospectively waterproof. Well, maybe not the very last scene—a duel between an automobile and an old biplane. (Varrick is an ex-pilot.) But we know there has to be a biggie for the climax, and Siegel shoots and edits it well; and the duel is capped with a snapper.

Siegel and the authors have a feeling for the odd settings so helpful in giving tangential zings to a thriller: a hideout in the basement of a Chinese restaurant, a cheaply *luxe* brothel in some trailers, a seedy photographer's studio. Along with these come the requisite oddball characters: a big quiet pipe-smoking killer, a crippled gunsmith, a sexy blonde passport forger.

But the key casting was Walter Matthau as Varrick. To make a bank robber and killer of the epitome of wry, undemonstrative, middle-class respectability, the king of second mortgages and six-packs, was a very sly move on Siegel's part: we're on Varrick's side almost before the picture begins, because of Matthau's previous pictures. Andy Robinson, who was a maniacal killer in *Dirty Harry,* plays Matthau's unstable pal. He is developing quite a line in instability: he was Mishkin in Joseph Papp's production of Montgomery's *Subject to Fits.*

When gifted people who take this kind of filmmaking seriously get the right material to be serious about, they make very good trifles. Which this is.

Hams across the sea. Two new films, just by the coincidence of their release, highlight a relation that has underlain the film world since the very beginning. Since the turn of the century, the interplay of European and American filmmaking has been important to each, in different ways. For instance the gigantic Italian spectacles imported before 1914 changed the mind of the US industry toward feature-length films and helped impel the erection of movie palaces. And the crystallization of film vocabulary by Griffith was the basis of early Soviet film.

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

Bang the Drum Slowly. A baseball picture, even for nonfans. Good direction and acting make it enjoyably sentimental.

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Jerry Bruck's fine documentary about a fine political journalist, especially cheering in these gummy times.

The Long Goodbye. Elliott Gould as a spoof-serious private eye, out of Raymond Chandler via Robert Altman's wit.

The New Land. Jan Troell, Liv Ullmann and Max von Sydow complete the Swedish-American epic they began with *The Emigrants.* Bravo.

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Kenneth Evett on art

Back to WPA

Now that abstract art is drifting toward an iconographic dead end, the once secure doctrines that sustained it are being supplanted by wildly proliferating heresies. In this late-hellenistic state of affairs, any form of action, with or without historic precedent, from wallowing in sheeps' entrails, to painting like Van Dyke, to making marks on the walls of caves with pigments ground in bison fat, may be called art. This condition may not be reassuring but it is open. Esthetic options and traditional connections that would have been unthinkable five years ago are now being investigated; among these unorthodox inquiries is a renewed interest in art as a social force. This preoccupation flourished and presumably died in the '30s, but now in the '70s, as one evidence of the current groping search for meaningful content, the concept of art as an instrument for social change is with us again. One recent contribution to that revived awareness, Francis O'Connor's book *WPA Art for the Millions* (New York Graphic Society; $22.50), provides a comprehensive, often tedious and sometimes moving evocation of that phase of American cultural history.

As a one-time freeloading participant in the WPA program, my initial response to O'Connor's collection of essays and reproductions was an embarrassed sense of *déja vu*. Why not let these pastiches of Renaissance and Mexican mural painting, along with the half-baked cubist easel paintings, the gloomy regionalist graphics, the stylized symbolic stone sculpture, earnest manifestos, and other naive creations of the '30s take their chances in the winnowing action of time and, if their luck runs that way, be allowed to go quietly down the drain? However, as a possible corrective to the peremptory judgments of instant art historians, O'Connor's book—a cautionary reminder of the fluctuations of establishment taste and a source of previously unpublished historic material—serves a useful purpose.

These essays, written in the midst of the Great Depression and haunted by presentiments of World War II, are alternately prophetic, innocently provincial or absurdly optimistic. Brought together by the exigencies of the Depression and the economic brotherhood of shared federal support, artists of the WPA attempted all at once to establish a native American art tradition, or "usable past," in WPA Director Holger Cahill's phrase, while they also tried to imitate the revolutionary gestures of the Mexican muralists, connect with radical formal innovations of the modern movement in Europe, and participate in political action by organizing artist unions, congresses and the like. A curious ideological amalgam of Marxism, the theories of John Dewey and native democratic idealism pervades the esthetic thinking of the time. Then as now the relationship between revolutionary rhetoric and radical esthetic action, the interaction between patron and artist were ambiguous. Artists of the WPA, while on the government payroll, advocated revolutionary politics and radical art, but for the most part their sentimental glorifications of the working classes or somber representations of historic American events employed routinely conventional systems of drawing and space definition. Because of the dichotomy between presumed radical content and status quo formal means, most WPA mural painting now seems pretentious. Those lumpy figures of brick layers, housewives, wild Indians, cowboys, carpenters and railroad men, all delineated in heavy Renaissance modeling, as they make their perfunctory occupational gestures, simply lack conviction.

Compared with these dull images and the high sounding palaver that surrounds them, the writing and visual creations of the abstract artists of the time seem refreshingly lively and forthright. Works by Stuart Davis, David Smith and Arshile Gorky clearly show them to be the real revolutionary artists of the period. They held the fort for the ultimate triumphant emergence of abstract art. Ironically even they were constrained by the accepted dogmas of the day to drag in respectable clichés of radical lingo as justification for their esthetic audacities. In fact the content of their work was either intensely personal and therefore remote from the general nature of causes, or coolly detached, or just good-humored (as in Stuart Davis' handsome mural "Swing Landscape"). Whatever they said, the force of their art was not aimed at overthrowing capitalist society. The subsequent large-scale production of ornamental abstract painting, which their esthetic radicalism helped bring about, was eventually parlayed into a big business, controlled by international cartels and exploited with every device known to the capitalist system.

If radical abstract painting found its fulfillment as status-symbol decoration in the office buildings, homes and museums of affluent Western society in the '50s and '60s, subsequent revolutionary art activity has been subsumed as entertainment by wealthy connoisseurs in Tokyo, Milan, New York, Cologne and Sydney. A quotation from Giralamo Piccoli's *Report to the Sculptors of the WPA Federal Art Project* may show how times have changed: "We on the project no longer work blindly, nor are we isolated from society. We have a client. Our client is the American people. But does this mean that we must pander to the most undeveloped tastes of our society? Obviously not. Does this mean we cannot use the most developed form of art expression? Again, we must say no!" The parochial missionary zeal of this statement is a far cry from the calculating, transcontinental maneuvers of the current scene, where operators like Robert Scull and Henry Geldzahler ply their trade. It is a reflection of the idealistic New Deal belief in the possibility of effective cultural change and the social responsibility of the artist. Although most of the artifacts of that era now seem abysmally grim, the WPA did for the first time engage the federal government in large-scale support of the arts, did keep a number of talented artists alive and working, and did nurture the radical abstract art of the future.

One prophetic contribution of the WPA was the organization of community art programs and regional art centers. The originators of these farsighted projects recognized that participation in the arts, both at the audience level and the level of individual creative involvement, offered a way out of the prison of self and circumstances, as they provided an avenue to constructive social action. The potential import of such programs for American culture today is evident. As the dehumanizing forces of Big-Brother socioeconomic control and mass-media culture gain in power, participation in the arts is one of the few remaining forms of action that allows for immediacy, individual control and resolution, or, as Harold Rosenberg puts it in his essay *The De-definition of Art* (Macmillan; $2.45), ". . . painting (or poetry or music) provides a

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Pornography and sexual deviance

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means for the active self-development of individuals, perhaps the only means. Given the patterns in which mass behavior, including mass education, is presently organized, art is the one vocation that keeps a space open for the individual to realize himself in knowing himself."

Not to be confused with therapy, mere diversion or self-aggrandizement, creative action is an intrinsic experience that should be the groundline for a sound education. If we are serious about the "quality of life" in this society, and if that phrase means anything more than having massive availability of canned media experience or the national ritual of buying and using more of everything than we need, the arts should play a vital role in our future. More will be needed than a National Endowment for the Arts grant of $10,000 for an art program at Attica prison, though that is a step in the right direction. But of course an arts program of any consequence should offer a primary experience rather than a corrective one. While universities and art schools are now turning out artists and highly qualified graduate students at a record rate, job opportunities for teaching more artists to teach more artists to teach are bound to dwindle. We will soon have a great reservoir of jobless creative talent that should be put to use. A new version of the WPA art project, consisting of community art programs, local art centers and creative projects for artists would make sense—though I don't see it as a major legislative item on the Nixon agenda.

There is no evidence of anything like WPA solidarity among professional American artists today. The closest thing to it is in the women's liberation movement, where the emphasis has been on creative action, commonsense organizational moves and the design of supportive, innovative environments (like Woman House in California or the Feminist Art Center in Ithaca, NY) rather than on revolutionary rhetoric. One measure of the depth and independence of the movement will be the originality of its contribution to modern iconography. A current exhibition, "Voices of Alarm," brings together a disparate group of artists who have in common an awareness of the absurdity, evil and corruption of contemporary life. These painters and sculptors employ a vocabulary of protest that is far more intense and uninhibited than anything known in the '30s. Using the image-making freedom guaranteed by our sexually liberated culture, they have invented some highly charged configurations. Whether raunch, sour, humorous, angry or romantic, these creations reflect intensely private responses to the evils of the day. Of this group, May Stevens and Rudolf Baranik are involved in a contemporary esthetic dilemma. Both of them employ protest images of authentic emotional force, yet both adhere to the abstract formalist conventions and innovative devices of the New York school, almost like a rerun of the '30s in reverse. The one great contemporary visual comment on this society, Norman Daly's unprecedented creation—The Civilization of Llhuros—has no polemic intent, but this imaginary archeological civilization is a revelation of the obsessions and psychic condition of our times, offered in the form of an artful and seductive array of sights, words and sounds.

In the present cultural context, all such attempts to intensify and expand the iconographic range of contemporary art become radical moves against the boring limits of minimal cool and the frivolous japes of Warholian fun and games. While I hope we will be spared the pious pronouncements and heavy visual exhortations of the WPA, a revived interest in the social force of art could now lead to a strong new manifestation of the age-old exchange between art and life.

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Mishima Trilogy

Spring Snow
Runaway Horses
translated by Michael Gallagher

The Temple of Dawn
translated by E. Dale Saunders and Cecilia Segawa Seigle

(Knopf; $7.95 each volume)

In *The Temple of Dawn*, the third volume of his *roman de fleuve, The Sea of Fertility*, Yukio Mishima continues his meditations on the meaning of Japan's modernity and the resulting loss of her cultural mastery. But the story has already been told; this third volume is an anticlimax. Since World War II few writers in Japan have sought to raise this cultural question as consistently as Mishima in novels, plays, movies and essays, and none has tried to dramatize his concern on such a scale. Only Mishima has continued the prewar debate on politics and culture. In a desperate act he alone was willing to give himself to the claims of romantic irony. After completing the last volume of his tetralogy in 1970, as testimony to a defense of culture and vanished ideals, as a traditionalized expression of sincerity and honesty *(makoto)*, Mishima committed suicide, thus recapturing for his indifferent countrymen the heroic ideal of the pure and sincere warrior-retainer of an earlier age. His death symbolized the end of a Japan that he had tried to redeem through art before it disappeared completely. Even the militant left wing of the student movement was impressed by the sincerity of his act. For like many characters he had written about, Mishima's suicide was an attempt to show for one last time the harmony between thought and action, art and life, and politics and culture.

If Mishima's suicide marked the completion of his tetralogy, the tetralogy would mark his most coherent statement concerning the solitary "return to Japan." It is, in fact, this theme, the "return to Japan," inspired in part by Hagiwara Sakutaro's ironic poem of the late 1930s, that serves as the constant organizing metaphor of so much of Mishima's writing. He gives new expression to a cultural consciousness that had dominated the literary and intellectual world of the 1930s, concentrating on rejoining culture to politics, obliging writers and intellectuals to engage the question of modernity, its historical meaning and its cultural price. From Tanizaki Junichiro's gentle invocation of the world of the shadows, through Yasuda Yujuro's programmatic romanticism, to Yokomitsu Riichi's long and obscure novel, *The Lonely Journey (Ryoshu)*, a generation of Japanese writers sought to reaffirm what was essentially Japanese by rediscovering the "wholeness" *(zentai)* which, they believed, had nearly been destroyed by a half century of enforced social change. While they could not agree about what constituted wholeness or indeed Japaneseness, all thought that contemporary life had become divisive and fragmented. This conviction was so strong among writers and intellectuals that the decision to go to war in 1941 represented for many the essential condition for liberating Japan from its slavish dependence on the West and the principal means by which to "overcome the modern." War promised deliverance from the divisive and fragmented life of modern society.

If returning to wholeness took many forms—for who could say what really constituted the indestructible elements of national personality—it was a shared irony that made the search for character and culture seem imperative and possible. To return to something, either to the traditional village community or to the esthetic of an earlier time, meant making a choice between a culture which, to many, had already become an endangered species and a civilization which had the fit of hand-me-down clothes: functional but uncomfortable. Even though few believed in the possibility of a literal return, all agreed that the choice had to be made. In *The Temple of Dawn* Mishima reaffirms this perception: "... the Japanese, when the nation had embraced a new culture and ethic at the end of the last century, turned their efforts to eliminating the barbaric customs of preceding generations. As a result the genuine, unadulterated national spirit was subordinated. . . ." But, recalling the passionate intensity of Japanese romantics of the 1930s, Mishima added: "... whatever frightening mask it might assume, the national spirit in its original state was of pristine whiteness."

For Mishima, then, war, defeat and reconstruction changed nothing. Indeed the transformation of postwar Japan into an affluent and indulgent bourgeois society made the choice even more urgent since it made the sustaining irony more remote. In a remarkable essay called the "Defense of Culture," (1968) Mishima denounced the glittering rococo culture of the "Showa Genroku" as counterfeit—for foreigners Japanese culture was paraded as an "indulgence," for Japanese it was "linked to the values of peace and prosperity." In both cases culture was "short-circuited," diluted for mass consumption, revered as an ornament, a thing in itself, removed from the living sources that had given it expression, "an embarrassing compound of museumified death and the dead life of peace and prosperity." In rejecting the dangerous cosmopolitanism of socialist politics as he called it, Mishima offered a particularistic inheritance rooted in a specific geography, history and national character. "It is important to grasp the national uniqueness in culture," he wrote, and the fundamental "form" that gives special shape to culture. The form which has shaped national culture in Japan is the dualism represented by the "flower" (or chrysanthemum) and the "sword." Both creativity and action have been shaped by this duality; and it is the associations which the dualism inspire that has given to Japanese culture, regardless of the form it takes, its essential "Japaneseness" *(Nihontekina mono)*.

The associations which the flower and the sword call forth are beauty and strength, life and death, the contemplative and the active, purity and truth. Specifically, Mishima argued, the flower represents beauty, perfection, the quiescence of contemplation and the sweet shortness of all that is truly beautiful, while the sword expresses the true, the pure, the active and the means by

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which the body is killed once it has reached perfection. Much of this Mishima catalogued in his celebration of samurai *machismo*, *Sun and Steel;* the Japanese have always seen in the achievement of beauty, the instant a flower reaches full bloom, a withering and decay, which then discloses the sadness of things. It is important to note that beauty always carries with it the promise of rapid evaporation.

For Mishima this esthetic was expressed best in the martial art which, he states, is "a system in which ethics become aestheticized or aesthetics becomes ethicized," where art and action, literary and military skills, culture and politics are rejoined in a delicately balanced synthesis. The fragmentation of spheres of activity and modes of consciousness are overcome: "lost connections are restored." The sword represents the "flower of physical perfection and the will to fight." But action, like beauty itself, "perishes with the blossom." Success or failure in action are irrelevant. Only death validates action and spares the actor from the disillusionment that his acts will count for nothing in the determination of history.

It was this concept of evanescent beauty and evanescence that has provided Mishima the leitmotif for his tetralogy. In the *Spring Snow* the aristocratic Kiyoaki Matsugae, too sensitive for the harsh gaucheries of late Meiji civilization, dies before he is 20. Here Mishima equates youth and beauty with death. But, as a good Buddhist, Mishima arranges for Kiyoaki's reincarnation in the character of Isao Iinuma who, as the dialectical opposite of Kiyoaki, has committed himself to the purity of action. Isao, the central character of the second volume, *Runaway Horses,* has prepared his body for a sincere and pure act that can lead only to his death. But it is death that he seeks. The métier of action is a plot to rescue the emperor from the stranglehold of venal industrialists and self-seeking bureaucrats (a sentiment which informed many of the plots and assassinations of the early 1930s). Isao's plot was inspired by the revolt of the "League of the Divine Wind," a band of loyal samurai who in the 1870s rebelled against the government's declared policies of westernization and modernization. The conspirators are apprehended before the plot gets off the ground, but Isao is allowed to commit the acts for which he has prepared his mind and body. He assassinates a major industrialist and then commits suicide. It is important to note that Isao is really unconcerned with actual failure or success. Such concern would make his act political. He is interested only in committing a sincerely pure cultural act.

In the third volume Mishima's youthful heroes are reincarnated in a beautiful Thai princess Ying Chan, who also dies in the full blossom of youth. *The Temple of Dawn* is centered less on the recurring themes of beauty, youth and death than on Shigekuni Honda's ob-

Phylogeny

Listen: in the distance delicate hooves of sable antelope
beat the savannah. The signals spell *hurry, hurry,* but you
are heavy, and wait. In your throat the hippo yawns: some
other time. The stiff bones in your ears will not tap the
love cry of the bowerbird, the presence of elephants is huge
in your thighs, and the brain is a weight, your head hangs
heavy, heavy, and you doze, the thick sleep of the sloth. In
shallow water the crocodile smacks his jaw, thinking for you
and monkeys in leafy heights make small, chattering advances,
but you miss all of it. All this

will change. As the antelope approach their cries are shrill,
staccato. Now mice dart in and out the small bones of your
ankles, the leopard's spots are your heart beating faster, and
in the coiled blood of each wrist a forked tongue flicking.
Quick from the dark back of the cerebellum a tiger leaps, and
at last you look up, you look out over the grass, you see.
You see the fine hairs on the antelopes' bodies, you see the
distance itself as a thing, you see the grains light is made of

and now you know what you were made for. The ganglia
dance. Pure joy
that levels into an ease of zebras. The lion slinks away
from your fiery brow, you bask in your fineness, a gazelle
grazes in each eye

but sand is seeping through the desert floor one grain at a time.
Why are you puzzled when the hartebeeste startles? When the
smoke of each hot synapse clears, you're left with nerves raw
as the sunset, and when they turn their hind quarters toward you
and go back into the humid dark, one giraffe stays: your
muteness—and even now the camel and the dromedary are plodding
identical miles without water to meet in you. One by one the
giraffe nibbles the leaves from the tree of language, and when
it's bare the camel and the dromedary arrive and give you steadiness
and dullness. Now the past is printing fossils of all you will forget

but this peace will sometimes be troubled by memory, butterflies
that blaze once and are gone. And your sleep disturbed by dreams—
and oh yes, those hyenas cackling at the edge of firelight are
what's left of your laughter. Go on, try it, it helps
to carry your tail between your legs

and that's all
except that into the territory of your century may wander,
occasionally, a friend. Listen: in your left ear an ape
screeches. His easy glee is foreign to you now, but he
will stand upright beside you
and take your hand.

MARILYN THOMPSON

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sessions with Ying Chan. Honda appeared first as Kiyoaki's friend, served later as Isao's counselor and now is a man plagued by a past which continues to reverberate in his memory. He is also bothered by the meaning of history, disturbed by the perception that individual acts make no impression on the course of history. Mishima has fashioned Honda, whose memory links the past to the future in the cycle of incarnations, as an example of the modern Japanese commitment to rationality and reason. It is hardly accidental that Honda was trained as a lawyer and that early he is described as one "who was persuaded that his own world was one of reason and clarity." But time erodes this easy confidence. In *The Temple* Honda, already in his late 40s and no longer interested in the passions of public history, is now aware that his own life, like the life of his former friends, will not affect the course of history. History only changes the mode of action: "In place of the era when Kiyoaki had perished on the battlefield of romantic emotions, a new period was coming when young men would die on real battlefields. Its forerunner was Isao. In other words Kiyoaki and his reincarnation Isao had died contrasting deaths on contrasting battlefields." One was the flower, the other the sword.

Honda's awareness of the reincarnation of Kiyoaki and Isao, and his newly acquired historical consciousness prompts him, during the war, to examine the Buddhist conception of transmigration and *samsara*, of how the phenomenal world is formed by consciousness. He discovers that the world exists—the world as illusion—to give humanity the chance for enlightenment. Just as this theory reassures Honda that the pasts of his friends were destined to be reincarnated without effect on history, so it also convinces him that war was neither an end to the world nor a beginning. Armed with this pessimistic vision Mishima abandons his earlier themes. Honda's meditations dissolve into an erotic obsession to make it with Ying Chan; he fails and Ying Chan dies. The conclusion is that nothing of the previous experience mattered since none of it was real. The new culture hero of postwar Japan is the dirty old man.

Mishima's perception of Japan's modern experience is still compelling. The earlier impulse to "return to Japan" is, ironically, invalidated by an awareness that Japan is no longer fertile ground for the very values which had given culture its distinctive shape, its "Japaneseness." Culture has failed, wholeness has become a fantasy, and the connections that once made for a community are irretrievably lost. Early in *The Temple of Dawn* Mishima, through Honda, wonders about culture and wholeness, and how he as a Japanese might live in a world without them. Honda's meditation provides a question to the question and, perhaps, an epitaph to Mishima's life:

> Nothing had ever forced Honda to probe the question of an unadulterated Japan more deeply than had Isao's death. Was there any way to live honestly with Japan other than by rejecting everything, than by rejecting present day Japan and the Japanese people? Was there no other way of living than this most difficult one, in which ultimately one murdered and then committed suicide?

H. D. Harootunian

Peter Meinke on five poets

"Whatever has happened, whatever is going to happen in the world, it is the living moment that contains the sum of the excitement, this moment in which we touch life and all the energy of the past and future." Muriel Rukeyser wrote this over 20 years ago in the introduction to her biography of Willard Gibbs; the words apply perfectly to her moving achievement in her 11th book of poems, *Breaking Open* (Random House; hardcover, $6; paperback $1.95).

What Rukeyser is breaking open are the living moments of her life, our lives, a conscious affirmation of meaning and energy that our best poetry has always given us:

> Now that I am fifty-six
> Come and celebrate with me—
>
> What happens to song and sex
> Now that I am fifty-six?
> They dance, but differently,
> Death and distance in the mix;
> Now that I'm fifty-six
> Come and celebrate with me.

In *The Speed of Darkness* (1971) she wrote "No more masks! No more mythologies!" *Breaking Open* overflows with "naked" poetry about her family, her friends, her country, her religion, herself. The poems seek to break through to "touch": "I will kiss, I will bless/all beginnings." She has absorbed both the rolling rhythms of Whitman and the tighter cadences of Yeats. Her imagery is not wild but natural: water and earth, flowers, moon, shoreline. Life is a flowing, an outpouring, the makers and touchers lining up against the destroyers, the "anti-touch people." Even the section of "Northern Poems," translations of Eskimo songs, has the same positive, personal force.

In the face of a society that seems bent on self-deception and self-destruction, *Breaking Open* stands as a testament of human toughness and compassion, even against overwhelming odds, as in the poem about "The Kieu," the epic of Vietnam, which ends:

> Odor of massacres spread on the sky.
> Loneliness, the windy, dusty world.
> The roads crowded with armor and
> betrayal.
> Mirror of the sun and moon,
> this land,
>
> in which being handed to soldiers
> is the journey.
> Shame, disgrace, change of seas into
> burnt fields.
> Banners, loudspeakers, violation of
> each day,
> everything being unjust. But she
> does save him,
> and we find everything in
> another way.

The house of poetry in the United States today is like a high-rise condominium: crowded, diverse, its inhabitants with little in common and little contact. If we can think of Rukeyser as occupying a middle level, stylistically speaking, we find Ishmael Reed down at street level, "where the action is." His second book of poems, *Chattanooga* (Random House; hardcover, $5; paperback, $1.95), often has the feel of "found" poetry:

> Some say that Chattanooga is the
> Old name for Lookout Mountain
> To others it is an uncouth name
> Used only by the uncivilised

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Our a-historical period sees it
As merely a town in Tennessee

I don't think there is any one poem in *Chattanooga* as lively as "I Am a Cowboy in the Boat of Ra" from his first book, *Conjure* (1972), but some of them have the same engaging mixture of mythology, history (particularly black history), folklore, literary references and hip street argot. Like William Carlos Williams and Ferlinghetti, whom he sometimes resembles, Reed is not really as experimental or "free" as he at first seems, as in these lines from his fine ballad, "Railroad Bill, a Conjure Man":

Now Hollywood they's doing old
Bill they hired a teacher from
Yale. To treat and script and
Strip old Bill, this classics
Professor from Yale.

That is he frequently takes something like a "natural" quatrain and breaks it up into five or six lines to give it a looser feeling. In his novels like *The Free Lance Pallbearers* (1967), Reed comes across like a sort of black Nathanael West, but his poetry is often gentler, more subtle, as in "Jacket Notes" which begins "Being like a colored poet/is like going over/Niagara Falls in a/Barrel" and ends "But what really hurts is/you're bigger than the/Barrel."

I suppose *Chattanooga* can be called black poetry, but it's a far cry from, say, that of Don Lee or Bob Kaufman. Reed has his own "neo-American Hoodoo" esthetic, a voice that is recognizable as his own:

I'm going to strut all over your
Point like Old Sam Grant did
My belly full of good Tennessee
Whiskey, puffing on
A .05 cigar
The campaign for Chattanooga
Behind me
Breathing a spell
Ponying up for
Appomattox!

His poems read fast, are often very funny, the surreal elements (as in "The Decade that Screamed") used in a cinematic rather than literary way, *i.e.*, he's not "obscure." While his poems are in no way like Rukeyser's, they have in common a "readability" that should appeal to the general reading public (as differentiated from the poetry-reading public, which I take to be made up entirely of other poets). It is to this second, smaller, audience that the three other books under consideration will appeal.

After Reed and Rukeyser, Donald Justice seems very quiet, oblique. His fourth book (counting the pamphlet *A Local Storm)* is called *Departures* (Atheneum; paperback, $2.95): it is the work of a poet confident of his powers, his "old instrument." The mirror imagery so prevalent in *Night Light* (1967) is still present, but the dominant image is that of piano keys, worn piano keys growing "darker to the touch." His poems are basically, like Wallace Stevens', poems about poetry. Though the poet has arrived at a certain "success" ("He recognized the laughter"), there is the constant feel of loss, of departures, "Everything going away in the night again and again." In "The Telephone Number of The Muse," even She is departing:

I call her up sometimes,
long distance now.
And she still knows my voice,
but I can hear,
Always beyond the music
of her phonograph,
The laughter of the young men
with their keys.

The quiet irony, the metrical skill (what Richard Howard calls Justice's "elegance"), the tone of mournful thoughtfulness, remind one often of Howard Nemerov's poetry. Even the titles are in the ironical mode: "Pale Tepid Ode," "An Elegy Is Preparing Itself," "Sonatina in Yellow." The book is beautifully ordered, not just a random collection: beginning with "ABC" with its troubled directions to the poet (See how the fearful chandelier/trembles above you/each time you open your mouth/to sing. Sing") the book progresses through various stages of loss to the last poem in the book where

Everyone, everyone went
away today.
They left without a word,
and I think
I did not hear a single
goodbye today.

Charles Wright's second book, *Hard Freight* (Wesleyan; hardcover, $6; paperback, $3.45), begins with a moving "Homage to Ezra Pound":

And he has survived,
Or refused to follow, and now
Walks in the slow strobe of the
sunlight,
Or sits in his muffled rooms,
Wondering where it went bad,
And leans to the signal, the low
Rustle of wings, the splash of an oar.

Actually *Hard Freight* is less Poundian, less hard-edged, than his first book, *The Grave of the Right Hand* (1970). There are in both books many poems about other writers (Rimbaud, Rolfe, Kafka, Wilde in the present book) but, except for the Pound poem, I prefer his poems that catch his fascination with the "way the light falls/Like a cheap dress on a wrought chair," as in "Congenital":

Here is where it begins here
In the hawk-light in the quiet
The blue of the shag spruce
Lumescent
night-rinsed and grand

These are often hard poems to get into, but Wright's strangely lit and colored landscapes create a cumulative effect, disturbing and hypnotic.

"About This Course," the long last poem in David Shapiro's *The Page-Turner* (Liveright; hardcover, $4.95; paperback, $2.50), is wonderful; it begins with a villanelle with the "bone lines,"

The leaf twists and turns,
then floats down the drain.
Surely in all nature there's
no motion more ordinary.
And even if we were to describe it,
what would we gain?

and develops through surreal imagery and musical cadences into a poem that cannot be paraphrased but that leaves the reader at the end with the emotions one feels after hearing a powerful symphony; to extract from it would do it a disservice. It is a great stride forward from his previous book, *A Man Holding an Acoustic Panel* (1971).

Shapiro is a "difficult" poet, I suppose of the "New York school," surrealistic, almost Dadaesque, highly polished:

There is no saucer of love
for the peony,
Only a little brutal water

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from pipes.
The sink was on fire, death to all
leaves, Mother sleepy,
As Autumn flagged or breezed
out near the pumps.

This generally has very limited appeal, which is fine; nevertheless I'm glad to see him "breaking open" into poems that go past technique and into the primary human concerns from which poetry draws its breath.

Briefly then: five serious and solid books.

Scandalous Existence

From Time to Time by Hannah Tillich

(Stein and Day; $7.95)

Paulus by Rollo May

(Harper & Row; $5.95)

Hannah Tillich's book of memoirs has the power of a historical fiction, a truth told with a combination of candor and imagination. Of her life with the great theologian she has made a scenario of unforgettable images. The story she tells is not his but hers. Give or take some lurid details, it is also, I think, the story of many women. If there is scandal here, it is the scandal of modern existence spelled out in personal terms.

The plot of the scenario goes like this. In Rothenburg, Germany, in 1886 a girl baby is nearly strangled at birth. Her father, who cut the umbilical cord tangled around her neck, was a preacher and a superintendent of schools who later ruined himself with drink. Her American mother said that the girl had been fathered by an Indian chief.

At the time of World War I the girl studies art in Berlin. She is introduced to sex by a lesbian who later commits suicide. She is deflowered (her word for it) by one whom she calls "the theologian of the golden mouth." She has several women lovers, then marries an artist with whom she lives about a year

"Genuinely qualifies for that overused superlative, 'a major literary event.'"
—Publishers Weekly

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Edited by **Edward Burns**, Introduction by **Gilbert A. Harrison**

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On July 20, 1971, Stewart Alsop was told he had leukemia, and probably had only a year to live. More than two years later, Alsop is still writing his much-read column for *Newsweek* and still playing a wily game of tennis. His book is a rich mixture of personal reminiscence, medical suspense, some rather low comedy—and spirited commentary on such diverse subjects as the collapse of the Wasp elite, the strain of madness in American politics, living, and dying.

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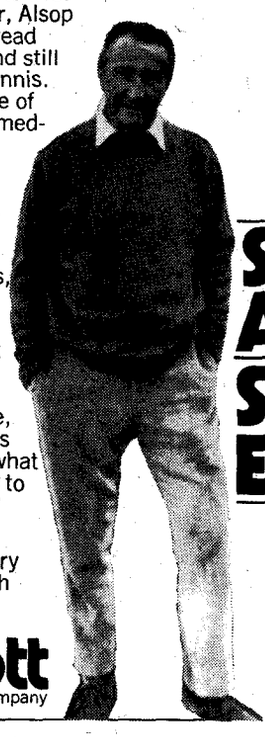

Peter B. Young

STEWART ALSOP
STAY OF EXECUTION
a sort of memoir

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and by whom she becomes pregnant. She leaves her husband and returns to the young theologian. Her child is born and dies. The theologian, who also had a dead child, divorces his wife, whom his own best friend, a minister, has seduced. The star-crossed couple moves in the most libertine circles of Weimar Berlin, a milieu in which sexual fantasies are openly discussed and acted out.

The couple marry. On their wedding night he leaves her at home and goes to an orgy. Although he seems to have done nothing there but talk, she hates him for his act of feudal scorn, a hatred not diminished by her lifelong admiration for his intellect and political courage.

Her awakening to heterosexual passion is the gift of a lover, to whom she soon turns with her husband's consent. The early years are a *ménage à trois*. The theologian's career now begins to unfold, while the wife develops uncanny powers of clairvoyance and mystical insight. She has already rejected the church and everything Christian. She becomes, without naming it, a pagan in search of herself. When a daughter is born, she calls her Erdmuthe (Power of the Earth), rejecting the husband's wish to baptize the child Christiane. She has affairs with numerous men, one of whom she calls her "blood and soil" lover, while another is her husband's student, whom she teaches to make love while helping to write his dissertation.

Germany is swept by Nazism. She knows, ahead of her husband, who is now a world-famous professor, that they must flee. They come to Union Theological Seminary in New York, start life anew as emigrées, drift very far apart. Each of them lives two lives. His acclaim grows. Along with it, he cultivates a secret sexual life—full of mistresses and pornography. Most of the time he hides his erotic behavior even from himself, refusing to acknowledge what he is doing, carefully protecting his public persona. In the new country she takes motherhood seriously, having now a son as well as a daughter. She learns to shop, pinch pennies, be a passable faculty wife, keep the home fires burning while the great man lectures and philanders. Yet in addition to *hausfrau*, she is a wild spirit seeking life. Lovers continue to come to her. She joins a foursome for group sex; her jealousy dies down.

At the age of 69 the great thinker becomes a university professor at Harvard. They escape the gray seminary for the intellectual capital of the country. She meets a young lover, the white knight of her dreams, but does not sleep with him. She takes up yoga and begins to find peace. They move to Chicago. Ten years her senior, the old man dies, asking her forgiveness, which she grants. She returns, a woman alone, to their house in East Hampton. His desk is heaped with unfinished theological papers. Its drawers contain a profusion of pornography. She spends two days at the hearth burning everything. She goes alone to India to learn better to meditate. Her life appears in vivid, isolated memories. She returns to the house by the sea and grasps the memories with the strength of a writer. Her life and her imagination are one.

"Essentially," the book begins, "it was a question of proving: 'I am. I alone am; the others are not. . . .' The moment I admitted the reality of the others, I vanished." This feeling did not prevent Hannah Tillich from being a keen observer of others. Perhaps it helped make her so. Still one does not read her book to learn about the others but about the woman who did not know who she was.

She never identified herself as domestic wife of the great man, nor as mother of children, although she played those roles. But to think of them as her destiny seems never to have occurred to her. She failed to pursue a career in her own right, studied art, painted and wrote a great deal; but if it occurred to her to exhibit her paintings, publish her jottings, do anything public in her own name, we do not hear of it. Her liberation, therefore, was all in head and bed. There it remained until late in her life; and because she was unusually intelligent, well read, imaginative and intuitive, her fantasy assumed cosmic proportions.

We read here of what may happen when the female psyche is liberated from Christian and bourgeois constraint without (for whatever reason) assuming the burden of a new social role. Demons (a favorite word of Tillich's, fully understood by Hannah) are let loose. Until she took up the discipline of yoga, to which she has now added the discipline of making a good book, Hannah Tillich was a woman possessed. Our culture is full of such people and is breeding more. The old fences surrounding the demons are down. Anger, revenge, narcissism, paranoia, insatiable appetite are upon us like gods come back to receive bloody sacrifice. Since the old fencing is decayed, we have to name the gods and find the inner disciplines to becalm them.

If one reads Rollo May's brief, psychoanalytic memoir, *Paulus*, one is told that Tillich's *eros* was all in the head, that Paulus' many affairs with women were not consummated in the flesh. They were verbal and spiritual seductions. Hannah, who might better know, and who gives telltale pieces of evidence, thinks there was plenty of action. But she says that Paulus hid his adventures from her, from society and even from himself, as he seems to have hidden them from Rollo May.

If she is right, then Tillich relegated, as the Christian tradition mainly does, his entire sexual life to the demonic and irrational side. He was intelligent enough to recognize its force, but gave it no place in his theology of the God beyond God. For all his *eros*, humanity, compassion, existential insight, Tillich was a philosophical male chauvinist, as he was at home. His wife was no less a female chauvinist.

Tillich's pursuit of women was a search for the Eternal Feminine. Whether he was exclaiming over the "10,000 women's legs" in Berlin, whether he was reading pornography, or whether he was seducing the latest woman of his life, he pursued the image of *la femme éternelle*, the shadow side of the Christian God, so deep in shadow that she cannot even be mentioned in systematic doctrine.

Meanwhile, back in Frankfurt or Morningside Heights or Cambridge, Tillich was married to a woman of great intensity to whom he could not deeply relate except with animosity. Nor she to him.

With the possible exception of Jungianism, there is no modern Western

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

KENNETH EVETT *is chairman of the department of art, College of Architecture, Art and Planning, Cornell University.* H. D. HAROOTUNIAN *is Max Palevsky professor of history and civilization at the University of Chicago.* MARILYN THOMPSON *is a poet who lives in Boulder, Colorado.* PETER MEINKE, *on leave from Eckerd College, Florida, is writer-in-residence at Hamline University, Minnesota.* TOM F. DRIVER *is Paul J. Tillich professor of theology and culture at Union Theological Seminary.* WILLIAM HAMILTON *is dean of arts and letters, Portland State University, Oregon, on leave this year to Empire State College in New York.* JOAN JOFFE HALL *teaches English at the University of Connecticut.* CLANCY SIGAL, *novelist, lives in London where he is finishing a new novel.*

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theology or philosophy that takes seriously the love and hatred that run between male and female. If our culture is to have a future, this will have to change. We have had enough of philosophical unisex, which invariably turns out to mean intellectual superiority to, and flight from, the feminine.

The answer surely lies in the intellectual reclamation of the body. I do not mean the subjection of body to intellect but the transformation of mind by the "wisdom of the body," not the objectified body, which gives rise to an imagination at once pornographic and mythical, but one's own body subjectified, *corps propre* as Merleau-Ponty calls it, *my* body as Jesus calls it, experienced as locus, ground and reality of my feeling and my action. Of such a body the mind is one organ, as the hands, genitals and skin are others.

When Hannah Tillich took up yoga, when she later sat down to write her story, I believe she came into her body. She writes from within it, just as Tillich did on one occasion when, in the *Travel Diary*, he told how he danced all night.

We do not need an abstract theory of how our abstractions "grasp" the ultimate. Hannah, who loved Tillich's mind, came at last to see its abstraction as demonic:

> I unlocked the drawers. All the girls' photos fell out, letters and poems, passionate appeal and disgust. . . . I was tempted to place between the sacred pages of his highly esteemed lifework those obscene signs of the real life he had transformed into the gold of abstraction —King Midas of the spirit. . . . It was all in his books, human beings pressed like butterflies, whole landscapes of oceans, trees, blades of grass, and mountains, pressed between the pages of these often-discussed volumes.

Hannah Tillich has let loose the butterflies, as ugly as they are beautiful. Her book made me bleed.

Tom F. Driver

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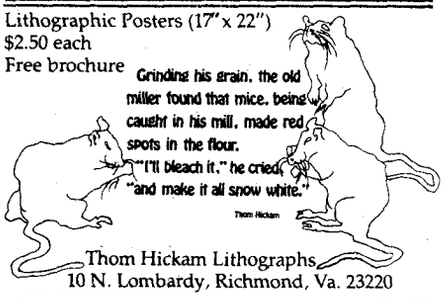
Grinding his grain, the old
miller found that mice, being
caught in his mill, made red
spots in the flour.
"I'll bleach it," he cried,
"and make it all snow white."
Thom Hickam

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Regard the End

Death in American Experience
edited by Arien Mack

(Schocken Books; $7.50, $2.95 paper)

For some reason death is coming into its own. Conferences, medical schools, churches, community groups of all kinds are huddling together over it. The nonbooks or semi-books on the subject are beginning to look like a flood. Get a psychiatrist, a literary scholar, perhaps even a theologian or two and they'll surely come up with something. It is all a little sad. We did it with anxiety in the '50s, with alienation in the '60s, with violence in the early '70s and now, death. Death, it looks like you can be proud after all.

This is in no sense a bad book, just otiose. Even brilliance gets deflowered in this sort of discontinuous and fragmentary context. The lead essay is of some general interest. By Talcott Parsons, Renee C. Fox and Victor Lidz, it is an expansion of an early piece on the same subject by Parsons and Lidz; in most ways really a nutty affair but somehow refreshing. It is rather nice to read something like this: "Death is now understood to be an important mechanism enhancing the adaptive flexibility of the species, through the sacrifice of individuals; *i.e.*, it makes certain that the bearers of newly emergent genetic patterns will rapidly succeed the bearers of old ones." This is known as the autumn-leaves theory, and as we rake our hearts out this fall we can reflect that life's like that. But of course they're right, and this kind of cool dispassion is rather fun after hours spent with anxiety and despair.

The Parsons, etc., essay makes a disastrous foray into the field of religion and mythology and offers an unbelievable interpretation of Gen. 1:3. Some evidence for such a mean-minded view: we are told that original sin is really a claim to immortality; we are told that animals are referred to in the phrase, "male and female created He them." The general biblical comments in this essay rarely rise much beyond the level of 19th-century liberal scholarship (wrath in the Old Testament, love in the New, that sort of nugget), and by the time one reads that Calvin was interested in building the kingdom of God on earth, one is tempted to conclude that none of us, ever again, should leave our narrow little fields. But the essay concludes with a very sensible analysis of some of the ethical crises in modern medicine today; it is a fine critique of the weaknesses in the classical life-preserving ethic.

Beyond the lead essay lies some excellent intellectual territory. David Gutmann argues persuasively that there is a connection between the counterculture and senility. Harold Bloom offers a characteristically lucid and detailed analysis of death in two poems, one by Yeats, the other by Stevens. William May turns once again to the subject he has virtually made his own, death as a sacred event. And he is never dull.

The debate goes on within these covers and without. Do Americans avoid death? Is fear of death inherent in us all? If so, how? What evidence is useful in adjudicating such issues? How much transcendence do we need to take away the fear?

No, we had better not eschew these semi-books, riding the culture's perception of intellectual fashions. Death, even though fashionable, is a problem of mind and spirit needing whatever insight, humor and eccentricity it can receive. It is tempting but probably reactionary to suggest that every time another interdisciplinary book on death comes out, one should reread Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. Or is it?

William Hamilton

Lives Alone

The Wind Shifting West
by Shirley Ann Grau

(Knopf; $6.95)

Women's isolation emerges more sharply as the focus of Shirley Ann Grau's new book of stories, *The Wind Shifting West*, than of her first collection *The Black Prince* (1955). Although few of the 18 stories expand in one's memory with the yeast of excellence, the volume as a whole is satisfying because it consistently and without fanfare delivers her vision of stoical endurance.

In the title story a woman, whose dessicated marriage is sketched for us immediately, allows herself to be seduced by her brother-in-law while on the way to rescue her foolhardy husband who has capsized his new boat. No one—least of all the author—is so romantic as to suggest that Giles and Caroline abandon their stale marriages for newly discovered passion. Yet Caroline is regretful that nothing remains of their lovemaking but "some weed on the anchor and some salt dried on our skin." Surely passion should change her. She is as isolated from her lover by such melancholy as she is estranged from her husband.

The nameless heroine of "The Way Back," also shepherded into adultery by an eager man, clutches an acorn as she drives tearfully home alone; the acorn bears more promise of the future than sex does. When she drops the acorn she must attend to her heartbeat to have faith in continuity. "And those sounds and movements in her body kept her from remembering: that kind of loneliness was the next thing to death."

Sometimes this theme is comic, as in "The Man Outside," where the farm wife gets her new husband to chuck the old one out; and sometimes the woman is very young, like the teenager in "Homecoming," whose widowed mother expects her to mourn the death of a boy she hardly knew. Far less often the isolated character is male, as is the murderer in "The Householder." In all these stories the protagonists are strengthened by enduring their isolation.

Grau seldom strikes a self-pitying note. She's interested in displaying not the sensitivity of her characters, but their strong defenses against despair. She's not fashionable: when she writes a story whose characters are modishly nameless, it seems silly. As a storyteller tracing the shape of loneliness she's quite different from Joy Williams or Joan Didion, whose females can whine with self-destructive masochism, and from Joyce Carol Oates, whose "scenes of passion and despair" erupt with violence. Grau's women are not grotesque in their isolation, but human for coping with it.

The main limitation of the stories, however, also lies in the choice of theme. The characters' dissatisfactions are revealed economically in the opening paragraphs: a tart reply, oppressive heat (many of the stories are set around New Orleans), a man drifting out of sight. The characters themselves seem to understand these details, just as Car-

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oline interprets the wet anchor or the woman driver the acorn. But their frustrations never issue in violence, hardly even in action. No action can take the death out of loneliness. Even revelations are underplayed. Hence the stories are static: we know from the outset that adultery is possible, for instance, and that it will change nothing. We know the farm wife can live with her hermit husband or without him—much the same thing—so her new husband is no surprise, nor the final ejection of the old. Caroline's mild regret is hardly different from her earlier malaise. Most of the individual stories are very accomplished, but so exiguous, so reduced in expectation, that one feels something's missing. Stories like "No Other Way" are exceptions because they at least suggest the alternatives to endurance.

This diminishment seems quite deliberately chosen, as if Grau were willing to pay its price, for the few stories that try for surprises seem gimmicky or cute—the neat parable of ecological disaster "The Last Gas Station" or "The Lovely April" which, relying on character changes, is too long and ill-proportioned. By the time one puts the volume down, however, one sees the strength that's gone into the rejection of passion and despair. For Grau's characters it's more important to cope with life than to fight against its conditions. Stoic endurance is a conventional female response, but Grau's best stories dramatize why it is better than emotionalism, passivity, or self-destruction.

Joan Joffe Hall

Satire as Prop

Searches and Seizures by Stanley Elkin

(Random House; $3.45)

I enjoyed "The Bailbondsman," the first and longest of Stanley Elkin's three novellas in *Searches and Seizures*. It's a mordant, deeply bitter and intermittently funny story about Alex Main, a middle-aged Cincinnati bailbondsman who plays God to a stream of petty criminals and their families. He is "one dreadful sonofabitch" and prides himself on shafting his clients openly.

A cross between Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts and W. C. Fields in *Never Give A Sucker An Even Break*, widower Alex is a scholar-humanitarian gone slightly mad. He gets his kicks from self-hate and manic stoicism in the face of universal agony. "Crime was the single mystery he could get close to." Alex's *shtick* is a gaggy, joke-a-minute stance. "Big shot," says Crainpool, his shrewd male assistant. "You'd kill me for nothing, for the sake of your style." Elsewhere Alex muses, "Style . . . as a young man he wanted it, hoped that when he wakened it would be there like French in his mouth. Now he sees it as a symptom of a ruinous disease."

A pertinent clue, perhaps, to why I'm generally unsatisfied with Elkin's book. The second novella, "The Making of Ashenden," is a fantasy satirizing Brewster Ashenden, an idle wastrel in love with Jane Loes Lipton, a kind of Baby Jane Holzer with a Schweitzerian yen to do good. The "shocking" climax, within the dream landscape of a rich Englishman's private zoo, has Brewster interminably screwing a bear which I *think* he does to prove to Baby Jane his manly virtue.

I'm almost certain I missed the point of this story and also of the slightly better "The Condominium" ("about the relationship of the houses people live in and their bodies," says the author). Marshall Preminger, a dispirited professional lecturer, returns to Chicago for his father's funeral. He becomes involved with the neighbors in his dad's middle-income housing co-op and, out of despair at their heartless authoritarianism, death-dives from a high balcony. Elkin talks his way out of these stories with patly unconvincing endings.

I say "talk" advisedly. Whether or not you like Elkin's stories depends on how generous you feel toward his ferocious, sometimes pointed but often mindlessly gruesome stream of masochistic repartee which I suppose is "Jewish." "What, you think it's hard?" Preminger says to his father's friends at the funeral. "This kind of talk? . . . It's *easy*. It makes itself up as you go along. You think it's conversation? It's dialogue. Conversation is hard. I don't do conversation . . . I don't even feel much of this."

Just so. Elkin's monologues, at which he excels, are the alienated patter of a brilliant, but turned off, stand-up literary comic. I'm very suspicious of it in large doses.

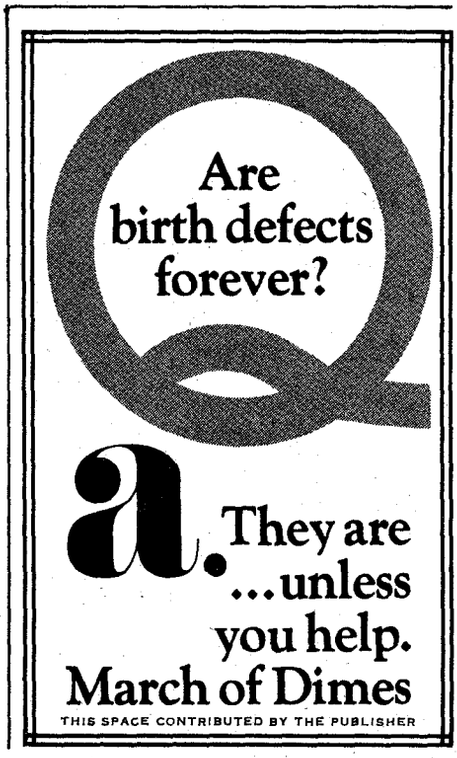
Stanley Elkin has a Ph.D. and has received the Longview Foundation Award, the *Paris Review* Humor Prize, Guggenheim and Rockefeller Fellowships, and a National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities grant. *Searches and Seizures* is accompanied by authoritative praise (William Gass: "among the finest in our literature"; Robert Coover: "wise and wonderful"). Such impressive credentials make me wonder if there is now an "official" black humor, an Establishment lenny bruce-ism.

One of the infuriating things about our culture is the ease with which satire and dissent become props of the system they attack. The artist rarely controls the uses to which his subversive impulse is put. But some writing seems to beg for assimilation by drowning pity and anger in an avalanche of overskillful absurdities.

How very tired I'm becoming of "absurd" humor, except in a master's hands. If technical virtuosity implied mastery Stanley Elkin would be home and dry. What spoils the stories for me is an absence of *relation*, of genuine emotion. Even while laughing at Elkin's many funny one-liners, I yearned for causality, for the author to relax a moment and play straight man to his effervescent wit.

This is not to deny the force of Elkin's talent for baroque. But placed alongside, for example, the genuine morbidities of Algren or Yurick or Lenny Bruce himself, his stories seem limp, exploitative and curiously commercial.

Clancy Sigal



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The flood of books on, about and by women continues unabated. Like all such overproduction, there are some virtues and some vices to it all. The vices, poor editing, poorer writing, a sense of what we used to call in poetry "occasional" writing produced on demand for the market are growing fewer. I note here this week some of the *good* books on feminist subjects to come my way.

Columbia University Press' *The Feminist Papers, From Adams to de Beauvoir* edited by Alice S. Rossi. Beginning with letters written by Abigail Adams in the 1770s, the anthology is comprehensive, including every document of major importance to the movement, and a careful selection of modern writers as well: Woolf, Mead and de Beauvoir. Here are, as Alice Rossi claims in her well-written preface, "the essential works of feminism," published over a period of 200 years. Her introductions to each section are informative and written with nonpolemical grace.

Scholarship has entered the arena of feminism. We now have biographies like *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, by Kathryn Kish Sklar (Yale University Press). Catharine's father, her brother and her famous sister are probably known to you; she should now be too, and her important but neglected work, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. In its time it was a revolutionary book about how to exercise power in the only realm then available to middle-class women, the home. Dr. Sklar's work illustrates how much careful and imaginative scholarship will do for the "movement."

A book neglected largely when it appeared is Kathryn Watterson Burkhart's sociological study of *Women in Prison* (Doubleday). The result of 400 interviews with female prisoners, this incisive and valuable survey is largely in the first person. It contains a good bibliography and an interesting glossary of prison terms.

Another work of sound scholarship: Oxford University Press has published *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*, by Allen F. Davis. Detailed and well researched, this account of the famous American social worker and labor organizer who was villified and called a Bolshevik later because of her pacifism during World War I is the best thing written on Jane Addams I have seen. Walter Lippmann, it will be recalled, once said of her: "She had compassion without condescension. She had pity without retreat into vulgarity. She had infinite sympathy for common things without forgetfulness of those that are uncommon."

Movers and Shakers by June Sochen (Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co.) interested me because of its thesis that women as well as men are makers of cultural history, and because it allows some hitherto neglected women in the 20th century to take their places as "shakers and movers," women like Pearl Buck, Fanny Hurst, Henrietta Rodman, Susan Gaspell, Freda Kirchway, etc. A useful antidote to some very often all-male cultural history.

If you recall Sheila Burnford's *The Incredible Journey* with pleasure, you will like *One Woman's Arctic* (Atlantic-Little, Brown). This is not so much a declared feminist book as it is the skillful and finely written diary of Mrs. Burnford's two summers among the Inuits (Eskimos). Her sympathy for her people is characteristic of this charming woman's charming prose. Characteristic also is the ease with which she slips into the customs and hardships at Pond Inlet very near the North Pole. Travel book, yes, feminist, somewhat, if you regard exploration of the Arctic regions man's work, but more than that, a graceful, gentle and loving anthropological, naturalist and sociological study of a civilized and gentle people.

I was less impressed than most reviewers with Jane Howard's recent autobiography, *A Different Woman* (Dutton). But I did enjoy the portraits of other women she has encountered in her professional career at *Time-Life*, and the view she has of herself. I think she is a little hard on feminists and their "abrasiveness," mistaking the "impression they must make on the undecided" for the effect they clearly have on her. But the book is well worth reading even if you find yourself left with reservations.

I have no reservations about *In Search of Ali Mahmoud: An American Woman in Egypt* (Saturday Review Press), Vivian Gornick's account of a visit made to Cairo, to find out what life in that culture could mean to an American-Jewish woman-journalist. What she learned is complex and revealing; most of all it says a great deal about the Arab view of women. Says Ms. Gornick: "I came to Egypt angry, and I'm going away angry." An American feminist's view of middle-eastern culture, emotional, at times, yet cold-eyed at others.

The first person to be concerned with the ecological problems of pure air, water, food as a science, Ellen Swallow called environmental science by its pres-

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ent name although with somewhat different orthography. Robert Clarke's biography, *Ellen Swallow* (Follett) traces her extraordinary career from her birth in 1842 until her death, full of honors in 1910. She has been largely forgotten until now; this biography, well researched if not especially distinguished by its style, should restore this first woman to get a degree from MIT (and its first female faculty member) to the place in history she merits.

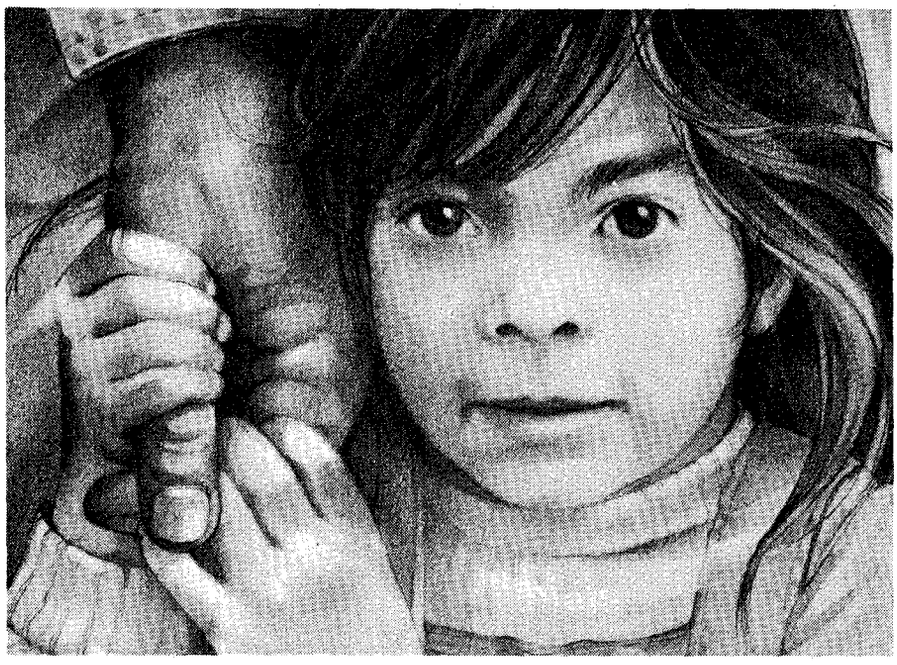
The most comprehensive book yet published on the subject: take note of *Child Care—Who Cares?* edited by Pamela Roby (Basic Books), with an introduction by Shirley Chisholm. This is a compendium of articles by professionals in the field of child care on the subject of early childhood development policies both here and abroad. Valuable as a reference work for anyone concerned with the care and welfare of young children.

Kauffmann, *from page 20*

Now, as examples of international interchange, we get a French film called *The Inheritors* (Cine-Artists-International) that is American in tenor and tissue, and an American film called *The All-American Boy* (Warner Bros.) that might better be titled *The All-Fellini Fellow.*

The first picture, written and directed by Philippe Labro, simply would not exist without scores of American precedents: it's a crime thriller that has gestated in the womb of the American genre. A young Frenchman (Jean-Paul Belmondo) inherits a very great fortune from his father, who died in a mysterious plane crash, and he steps into the mess that caused his father's death. Like so many US thrillers, it starts hard and real and gets progressively sillier as the crescendo of action takes it further and further away from credibility. It's one more film in which people who have lived relatively calm lives suddenly know what to do in extreme action situations.

The All-American Boy was written and directed by Charles Eastman, was made three years ago and has just been released. Aging in the wood hasn't helped. This is one of those Youth pictures that flooded out after *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider*, just as self-indulgent, incoherent



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and imitative of Europe as the worst of that juvenile flood. (And because so many of these pictures were awful, and flopped, we were told that the public was sick of Youth pictures.)

Jon Voight plays a young Californian, disconnected, unmotivated, who could be a successful boxer but backs out at the last moment because he can't cope with the requisite publicity and worldliness. The script is more disconnected and empty than his life. If Voight had the talent for picking scripts that he has for acting, he would be a true eminence. Just to see him *move* in this film, as against the way he moved in *The Revolutionary*, is to see an actor's imagination exemplified. But it's wasted.

Eastman, like Bob Rafelson and Paul Mazursky and Robert Altman, has been studying Fellini without understanding the cultural sources of Fellini. So we get superficial mimicry of bizarre effects—like a corps of gesticulating girl cheerleaders marching across an empty field—without basis or integration. And there are lots of preciously posed sex scenes, possibly out of Godard's *A Married Woman*. It's all the work of an intellectual and esthetic sophomore, saying, "Look at me! I've seen some foreign films! I'm for *art!*"

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